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Prologue

150 years ago.

At that time an abominable war happened which drove the majority of humanity to death, the Witch Hunt War.

Both humanity and the witches' side suffered a high death toll, and a massive destruction Invisible Disaster called Akashic Hazard resulted with the war coming to an end.

The winner of the war weren't the witches, but humanity. That's what was written in the history books.

However, the truth written in the books, and reality he sees in front of him today, are different.

Takeru overlooked the place called Magic Academy, stunned by Orochi's words.

"We call this place 'the inner world'. And we call your world just the opposite, 'the outer world'. Do you know why?"

"…there's no way I could know that. Just what is that light…!"

In response to Takeru's confused answer, Orochi sat down on the bed and spoke quietly.

"Inside and outside of the Sanctuary, that's what it means."

The Sanctuary. It was an area in which humans were unable to live in because of the Invisible Disaste Akashic Hazard.

The Akashic Hazard, it was a diffused mysterious magical attribute called 『Void』. Let Invisible Disaster alone human beings, not even witches were capable of going inside of it and surviving.

Where Takeru was currently standing, was inside of it. Is what Orochi was saying.

"In the past war, a substantial number of humans and witches were killed. However, it wasn't as if witches didn't expect this disaster to happen, and they covered this place with a protective barrier… creating something like a shelter."

It was something hard to believe, although protective material preventing the Void attribute has been developed with the usage of modern science, even the latest synthetic anti-magic material could stand only about thirty minutes of exposure.

The videos showing the inside of the Sanctuary taken by the satellites were disturbed severely by the magnetic field, and it was impossible to see it clearly. Humanity outside of the Sanctuary had no way of learning what was inside.

The witch's country exists inside of the Sanctuary… a gossip magazine once put out such an article, and it's been whispered about among people taking a form of an urban legend…

Takeru himself didn't believe in it despite seeing it in front of his own eyes.

"Over the last 150 years, Valhalla Fantasy Cult has somehow managed to boost the development of

witches in this place. Thanks to that they were able to restore it to this point. It wasn't just the magic technology, but also scientific technology that has evolved thanks to the feedback from the spies in the outside world. This place embodies the fusion of magic and technology, quite a big deal ain't it."

As Orochi puffed his chest proudly for some reason, Takeru turned pale and his lips trembled.

"…boost the development… you guys, just what are you trying to do…"

Hearing Takeru's question Orochi was dumbfounded.

"What you ask… ain't that obvious."

"……"

"Continue the war."

Takeru froze.

Continuation of war. Continuation of the Witch Hunt War.

What Orochi said, was that they are going to continue the war that resulted in the majority of humanity dying out.

"Shelters exist in various places, and magic has spectacularly evolved; were the war to be resumed, it would probably be quite even."

"……"

"Well, while there's a lot of folks who are saying "let's war" and speculate, there's just as many people who don't want it."

"……"

"Takeru… I am aware that you're still confused, but since there's an order from above so I'll get straight to the point."

Orochi opened his eyes clouded with white, and despite not seeing he stared firmly at Takeru.

"*Join this side.* If ya don't, ya will be disposed off together with Mistilteinn."

He broke out from his stupor, and realized what kind of situation he was in.

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Currently, Takeru… was captured by Valhalla's troops, and had become a prisoner.

Chapter 1 - Magic Academy

The Sanctuary has spread out swallowing almost the entire world.

The United States, Russia, China, and other countries has a significant amount of pollution spread upon them, and there weren't many habitable areas left for humans.

There were Inquisition headquarters in areas other than old Japan's land, but moving between the areas was limited to movement through the sky, and since its necessary to fly at an altitude of twenty thousand metres to be unaffected by the widespread Sanctuary, visiting other regions was difficult.

It was also difficult to call support from other areas because of the Sanctuary's interference which made it impossible to connect with them. On the other hand, the witches who survived by constructing a protective barrier have developed transfer magic and were doing that rather frequently.

The shelters created and maintained by the witches were spread all around the Sanctuary.

It seemed like even in the Sanctuary located in old Japan there was a small shelter.

"This place, is the European shelter. Everyone calls it Magic Academy."

The girl with blue hair, Kanaria was walking down the hallway with a stern expression and guiding Takeru through Magic Academy.

"All children born inside of Sanctuary are sent to this academy and receive magical education. It's a training institution for witches… just like Inquisition's AntiMagic Academy."

"……"

"This shelter's total population numbers fifty million people. In the spacious Sanctuary, there's a lot more witches."

Even as he listened to Kanaria's explanation, Takeru wasn't paying much attention.

After the case with Kiseki was settled, he fainted and was transferred into Magic Academy by Orochi. Since then, a month seemed to have passed already.

But even as he was told about Magic Academy, honestly, he couldn't get a good grasp on it. After all, the war is a story of the past to him, something that happened 150 years ago.

The country of witches exists, and Inquisition is hiding that fact?

If it's Ootori Sougetsu, then there's no way he doesn't know about it.

And after getting caught up in such a large-scale incident, Takeru felt completely lost on what's happening.

…I wonder what happened to the platoon members. And Kiseki…

He faced down frustrated.

Kiseki’s expression as their hands separated was full of sorrow.

He could also remember the voices of his platoon members who tried to get through to him.

『“Don’t go… Kusanagi…!”』

Recalling Ouka’s heartbreaking voice, Takeru squeezed his hand into a fist.

In the end, everything he did ended in failure.

He rejected the option of killing Kiseki, and decided to save everything.

However, he remained without any solution, and headed towards the end not knowing what to do.

Unable to do anything, he ended up just being used…

When Takeru recalled his powerlessness, all strength immediately left his body.

No matter how much I fret over it nothing will change… let’s just think about going back to where I belong for now. First and foremost I should learn what has become of the outside… I’ll have to get it out of them no matter what. My comrades safety and… Kiseki’s current status…!

He won’t stand just being able to pray for their safety.

Intending to resist everything that comes at him, Takeru walked forward

I must go back as soon as possible. To where my comrades are.

“——Hey.”

Suddenly, Kanaria’s face appeared right in front of his and she stared at him. Takeru strongly jumped back.

“Did you hear me?”

“Eh?”

“Did ・you ・hear ・me?”

Pointing her finger right at his nose, she came closer inquiring.

When he looked at her like this, he felt that she was unrealistically beautiful girl. She had blue hair, reminiscent of blue crystal and bright yellow eyes. Although she was still young and wasn't too tall, the bodysuit that fit her tightly displayed her feminine body line.

With a stern expression, Kanaria put a hand on her hip.

"Kana is busy. If there's no need to guide you, she'll be going."

"Sorry. I was lost in thought…"

"You need some self-awareness. I would lock you up if I could. You can't walk around as you please."

"I know that. I'm a prisoner of war right… for now."

Takeru said so, and touched the restraint attached to his neck.

It was a collar that had the same structure as the explosive-type Gleipnir. The reason Takeru who had no magic power was wearing this, was to prevent him from using Mistilteinn.

If he uses Lapis and tries to go into Witch Hunter Form the collar will explode.

As he noisily messed around with the collar, once again Kanaria moved her face up close to his.

"H-hey, y-you're too close, wh-what is it?"

As her pointlessly well-featured face approached, Takeru took a defensive posture.

She narrowed her eyes further starting at him, and inflated her cheeks with air.

"……don't think you won."

He had no idea what did she mean.

"I'm talking about the match a month ago."

"A match?"

"Don't misunderstand. You were in Witch Hunter form. It wasn't fair. You didn't win. I didn't lose."

"…ha?"

"D-Double-Edge style! Kana's stronger!"

Kanaria turned around on her heel.

After being yelled at by Kanaria, he recalled a little of what happened right before he was brought here.

Takeru had only a vague memory of fighting with Kanaria and the circumstances it happened in, but he was able to recall how her attacks felt.

At that time he judged that her skills were immature. It felt like it weren't his own thoughts and it was a bit weird, but as he recalled it, they certainly were immature. It was forceful, and it was a fact that it lacked the precision essential to Double-Edged style.

I’ll keep that to myself.

While looking at her back, Takeru chased after Kanaria.

What was he supposed to do right now, was to meet with the Magic Academy’s Chairman. Rather than trying to learn it from Kanaria, it was more efficient to question that person.

Until he understands the situation he is in, it’s pointless go act impatiently.

Rather than that, there was one thing he was curious about at the moment.

“Did you learn Double-Edged style from Master?”

Still pouting, Kanaria walked forward ignoring Takeru.

“In what circumstances were you taught? I was allowed to because I’m one of Kusanagi’s, even so, I had to prostrate for three days straight otherwise I wouldn’t be taught. If you’re not a relative, you must have had it even harder, right?”

“……why do I have to tell you that.”

She looked away irritated.

Although he was outright refused the answer, unexpectedly Takeru didn’t pull back.

In his heart, he was happy to get a junior pupil.

“How much did you learn? If you were taught the techniques, means you are quite acknowledged.”

“……”

“Training… must have been ridiculously hard on you, a girl.”

He continued to shower Kanaria with praise despite the fact that she decided to ignore him.

She opened her eyes wide only for a moment, and directed her confused gaze towards Takeru, then looked away again. She must have thought she failed, and tried to hide her face with her bangs.

With some intimacy in the gesture, Takeru placed a hand on her head like he usually did on Usagi’s.

“You did your best haven’t you. That’s quite something.”

As Takeru gently stroked her head and spoke, Kanaria’s body trembled for a moment like that of a scared fox.

Her pupils shook faintly.

From a series of her actions, it was obvious that she was upset. Master of Double-Edged style, Orochi, was unlikely to praise his disciples and as such, being acknowledged like that must be a first experience for her.

As he thought that with a smile, Kanaria’s face has turned red and she faced down.

“——Don’t act like a senior pupillllllllll!!”

A sound like a gunshot has rang out.

With an outburst of anger Kanaria made an uppercut aiming for Takeru's jaw. At the same time as Takeru's head rose up a few centimetres, his body was lifted slightly. He predicted that an uppercut would come and right before it hit him he jumped, decreasing the blow's power, but if he received that blow squarely as it came with momentum of a bullet he would surely have died.

"What was that?! A-are you trying to kill me?!"

"Fuu! Fuuu!"

"M-my bad, it's a habit…! Sorry for suddenly getting over-familiar on our first meeting!"

As Kanaria was looming towards him, her fists letting out a cracking sound, he apologized in a hurry with a pale face.

Just when he was pursued until his back hit the wall, and the situation has grown tragic,

"——Takeru?"

Suddenly, he could hear a voice coming from the other side of the corridor.

With his collar grasped by Kanaria, Takeru looked in that direction with a pale face.

There was a girl with a hat on her head and a muffler wound around her neck.

"…Mari?"

Seeing the appearance of his comrade, whom he thought it'll be impossible to see here, Takeru was agape.

While Mari stood there in in daze, tears started to gradually pool in her eyes.

"Uuu——uuUAAAAaaaaaaaaaann!"

Letting out a sobbing without any reservations, scattering things all around Mari started to cry on spot.

She rubbed her eyes like a child, and unsteadily came closer to him. Although Takeru was slightly embarrassed, he naturally hugged Mari's shoulder.

"Why are you here…?"

Mari tried to answer while crying, but she couldn't articulate any words and only sobbed.

"We brought her together with you. Orochi proposed that. 'There's no point in her staying in Inquisition', is what he said."

Beside them, Kanaria spoke in Mari's stead.

"After you've been knocked down by Orochi, this girl came all alone to help you."

Takeru fell silent and glanced at the weeping Mari.

Back then, Takeru released Ouka's Witch Hunter form and entrusted her to their comrades. Surely, Mari must have left the three behind and chased after him.

He placed a hand on Mari's head and lightly stroked it.

"I've made you worry… I'm sorry."

As he spoke with a gentle voice, Mari, whose face was already wet, has started to cry even more intensely.

Kanaria standing next to them looked at Mari puzzled, and shook her neck in a ‘good grief’ gesture.

“Despite acting energetically at all times, you show your weakness in front of a man. Kana really hates women like that.”

Hearing sarcasm in her voice, Mari turned around and glared at her.

“I don’t want to be told how a woman should act by a brat like you! In the first place, I’ve told you to call me immediately after Takeru wakes up! Why haven’t you caledl my mobile, you’re mean!”

“?! Uh…gh… w-we were supposed to go meet you now. Kana isn’t mean.”

“Liar! We just meet by chance because I was passing through here! Kana-chan, you shouldn’t immediately make up excuses!”

“I-it’s not an excuse… I’m no good with… machines. I don’t know what’s a mobile. K-Kana is…”

At first she acted strong, but blamed by Mari who was slowly approaching her, she started to step back.

The moment she was cornered against to wall with nowhere to run, Mari attacked her.

“Gyaaaaaaa!”

While Kanaria tried to escape the nelson hold, Mari used her fingers to play with Kanaria’s long ears.

“M-my earss! Let off my earrss!!”

“Come~on~ come on~! Admit that you had no intention of contacting me right from the beginning!”

“It’s truee! I really don’t know how to use a mobileee!”

Even as Kanaria’s face turned red and tears appeared in her eyes, Mari had no intention of stopping to play with her ears.

While Takeru was amazed by the two’s exchange, he looked at the scenery of Magic Academy spread outside the window.

Warning bells continued to resound in his head unchanged.

What was searing his brain, was not only the memory of being unable to save Kiseki, but also him abandoning his comrades.

Even now it was foggy and he couldn’t focus on it, the memory of that re-contract.

…*I wonder, what is she doing now.*

Worried about safety of his own weapon, Takeru formed a fist.

Lapis. Relic Eater 『Mistilteinn』

Since he was still alive and breathing, she too must have been in this place.

Takeru, Mari and Kanaria started to walk around the Magic Academy the three of them.

The place Takeru was in seemed to have been called the Magic Academy's 'Medical Magic Tower'. He felt that it resembled AntiMagic Academy's Seelie's hospital ward.

Although it was similar, Magic Academy wasn't as exaggerated as AntiMagic Academy. Students wore a uniform of ultramarine colour and didn't have a gun, they looked normal.

However, a wand entered his field of vision, it was holstered by the student's waist.

Wands were Magical Heritages assisting witches in creating operative procedures. When he looked around, he saw that a number of students were carrying various and strange magical catalysts.

Probably because it's a habit, but he was on alert.

While the outside world was relying on electronic equipment for stereoscopic videos and images, it seemed like magic power was applied to mechanical technology instead. There were many devices similar to those from AntiMagic Academy, it was probably because Alchemist was involved in development of both of them. However, probably most of the items in here could be only used by witches and sorcerers.

"Surprised aren't you. I was the same at first too."

Mari walking next to him said with a complex expression.

She spent the entire past month in this Magic Academy. It seemed like that was the reason she was acquainted with Kanaria. Since it wasn't unusual for a witch to come from the outside, Magic Academy treated her as a first year. The clothes Mari was wearing at the moment too, were something given to her by the school.

"Even now, I can't believe there's a world like this."

Mari looked outside the window.

There were hardly any people walking outside. Everyone was flying in high speed on something that looked like brooms which moved along something like a light tube which connected floating buildings.

Everyone in here was a witch or a sorcerer.

Nestling up next to them were fantastic or magical organisms. A small lizard with a red jewel embedded in its forehead, there was also someone riding a huge crow that was spitting a cloud of smoke from its mouth. The former was an extremely dangerous magical organism, the latter was a fantastic organism already extinct in the outside world.

Buildings were special too. Many of them were floating in the air. There were hardly any engines using electricity or fuel, and the machinery was running powered by magic power, the magic particles leaking out were shining all over.

This place, was overflowing with magic.

It was different world already. No matter how he tried to understand, his brain's processing wouldn't keep up.

“It’s great that you’re safe, Takeru. Did they do anything bad to you?”

“Oh, I’m perfectly fine. What about you, are you all right?”

“It’s just as you can see. Since there’s quite a few witches coming here from outside world, I’m guaranteed freedom to a certain extent. The collar… they have removed it for me.”

Mari looked at Takeru’s collar, and placed a hand on her neck where her collar was.

There was no Gleipnir on Mari’s neck. Apparently, Orochi had released her collar before they transferred to this place.

Even though she told him that Orochi released it, she had no idea how did he do that.

The moment Orochi in front of disappeared, the collar appeared in his hands, then was thrown and exploded far away.

In short, he must have cut and thrown away the collar faster than it could explode.

An outrageous forceful move, it was a feat impossible for normal people.

“Mari, there’s a number of things I want you to tell me.”

“…yeah, I don’t know all that much, but I’ll tell you everything.”

When Mari meekly nodded, Kanaria who was behind them cut in.

“Flapping your mouth is not good. Women from outside have really loose lips. You two are prisoners. You’re under obsh——”

The moment Kanaria tried to force herself to articulate a difficult word, Mari turned around and started moving her fingers in a suggestive way. Seeing that Kanaria moved back, and like a small fox, she hid from Mari behind the door.

Takeru ignored the two’s exchange, and moved straight to the topic.

“…do you know the current situation of our comrades and Kiseki?”

“I don’t know… I was looking for a way to contact them from this side, but it seems that there’s no way to contact with the outside other than through Magic Academy’s central. … and Kiseki-chan is… um…”

“……”

“She was taken back by the Inquisition, I know only that. It happened right in front of my eyes, but I was unable to do anything.”

Takeru’s fist let out a quiet sound. His expression was calm but… inside of him was boiling an intense anger towards Inquisition, it was so strong it seemed to burn him from inside.

“But, I think all of the platoon members are safe. They should have been able to ecape thanks to you opening a way for them. Usagi-chan and Suginami are there, surely Ootori must be safe. I believe in those two, that’s why I entrusted that woman to them.”

I’m confident that’s how it is, said Mari and downcast her eyes again.

“…however, this past month I’ve been hearing an unpleasant rumour.”

“Rumour?”

As Takeru asked, Mari spoke in a heavy voice.

“The war, although battles are sporadic, but it seems to have begun again.”

“……”

“It’s something I’ve heard from the students in here, but apparently small-scale battles have been happening in Grey City where the witches troops and Inquisition forces meet. Valhalla’s extremists arbitrarily activate large transfer magic, there’s a rumour an entire battalion has entered Grey City.”

Fantasy C

“……”

“If that’s true then… they might be in immediate danger.”

Impatience could be seen in Mari’s expression.

In contrast to that, although Takeru’s expression was serious, there was no impatience in it.

Instead, what could be seen was something like a sense of mission.

“…you’re surprisingly calm, Takeru.”

“…is that so?”

“If it were you from before, you would charge into action immediately like a wild boar. Did something change?”

Mari asked and floated a wry smile, in response Takeru faced forward and narrowed his eyes sharply.

“Nothing changed. It’s just… I decided not to give up on anything. No matter the circumstances, no matter the despair that spreads out in front of me… I will protect everything I want to protect.”

“……”

“If I want to do that then surely, running wild is not a good idea. After all, there are times where hurrying won’t solve anything. Right now, I think it’s time to understand the current state of affairs and look for the means to act.”

“…Takeru.”

Takeru said so with a serious expression.

“We’ll return to where our comrades are somehow. I want you to lend me your power for that.”

After hearing Takeru’s decision, Mari strongly nodded.

He once again faced forward, and asked Mari again.

“…do you know what happened to Lapis?’

“Oh, Takeru’s Relic Eater huh…”

“Since I’m still alive, it means that she’s in here even though she should have been on the Inquisition’s side. Do you know anything?”

“I wasn’t told anything related to our comrades. Shouldn’t she be right beside you?”

“No…”

Takeru touched his collar, worried about Lapis. That’s when,

“About that, we’re going to tell you everything so don’t ya worry.”

Orochi’s voice sounded from the other side of the corridor.

He firmly captured Takeru with his unseeing pupils and smiled.

Takeru glared at Orochi with a hint of hostility.

The room Takeru was brought to by Orochi was white and simple.

Wallpapers, ceiling, floor, desk, dresser, clothes hanger, everything from a tea cup to book covers were uniformly white.

Floating in the centre of the white space, there was a woman brighter than anything else.

For an instant, startled by her surreal appearance he thought she was a ghost.

The woman smiled gently to Takeru.

“Nice to meet you, Kusanagi Takeru-san. I am European Shelter’s Magic Academy’s east side Chairman, my name is Mother Goose. Pleased to make your acquaintance.”

With a smile, Mother Goose lowered her head respectfully.

Probably acquainted with her already, Mari looked at Mother Goose disgruntled.

“It must be hard for a convalescent to stand, I have prepared delicious tea so please, sit down.”

Mother said so warmly, and sat down on the coach. Takeru and Mari sat down on the sofa opposite to her. Orochi and Kanaria remained standing by the wall, sandwiching the door between each other.

Despite feeling slightly nervous, Takeru faced Mother resolutely.

Mother Goose drank a sip of the tea, and tilted her neck puzzled.

“How is your physical condition?”

“…thanks to you, I’m feeling well.”

“That’s great. I thought of coming to visit you directly, but I’ve been quite busy… did Kanaria properly guide you around? She might have dragged you around too much and exhausted your stamina…”

Although Kanaria standing by the door wanted to protest, but Orochi directed his cane towards her and she closed her mouth.

Even though Mother’s calm attitude and voice were driving him crazy, Takeru stared straight at her in response.

“——I didn’t come here to chat with you. Hurry up and get down to business.”

He said that bluntly, while releasing hostility towards her.

Mari bared hostility as well, but she was surprised seeing that, astounded by Takeru’s attitude. Kanaria opened her eyes widely, and Orochi whistled.

“I am grateful to you for healing and reviving me. But me and you guys, aren’t supposed to have a relationship that would let us care-freely chat over tea.”

“……”

“I don’t know whether you are my enemy or not… but I can assert that you aren’t my allies yet.”

While gazing sharply at Mother, Takeru spoke frankly.

Mother Goose didn’t seem to be upset, but she slowly opened her eyes that were closed up until now.

They were ruby-coloured, beautiful and intimidating.

“…what are you trying to say?”

“What do you request from me.”

“……?”

“Don’t play dumb. After all, you too have some underlying motive you want to use me for. If there weren’t any, you wouldn’t have given me this kind of treatment.”

Takeru who was forced into doing things up until now, decided that he will no longer dance to others tune. Moved deeply by Takeru’s manly attitude, Mari’s eyes who sat beside him were shining and sparkling. Blood vessels floated on Kanaria’s face as she was angered by Takeru’s attitude, and speaking of Orochi, for some reason he was grinning happily.

And, Mother,

“……uf…fu, fufufufu.”

Has placed a hand on her mouth, faced down and let out a classy laughter.

To the belligerent Takeru, it was an unexpected reaction.

“I’m sorry. You have suddenly went on the offensive, and I was a bit dumbfounded by that… please forgive me. It was too sudden.”

“That’s not something to laugh about… I-I’m serious… here…”

Takeru continued to fidget and fixed the position he was sitting in on the coach.

“Yeah, that’s right! Cut that out! You’re scheming something, even I can tell that!”

Capitalizing on it, Mari yelled out.

Once again, Mother honestly apologized to the two.

“Certainly, I have a request. You two are affiliated with Inquisition, in other words, your standing is that of our enemies… it seems like such a carefree attitude angers you. Then…

I’ll say it openly.”

Mother squinted, and told Takeru what she wishes for.

“Kusanagi Takeru-san. Please, don’t participate in combat any more.”

The atmosphere has frozen at the unexpected request.

Mother Goose was serious. He could immediately tell that it wasn’t a joke.

“As you already know, that control collar is there because we don’t want you to hold that sword any more.”

“…that sword. You mean Lapis?”

“Yes. If you hold Mistilteinn any longer, then probably…”

She looked at Takeru with compassion.

“Your soul will assimilate with her, and you will turn into a completely different being.”

“…what…do you mean?”

“You must have felt it. After all, the 『God Hunter Form』 was activated.”

He recalled it after being told so. Ambiguous consciousness. Unrealistic driving force of his body.

The feeling in his heart as if he was undergoing something like assimilation.

“…Takeru, are you okay?”

Mari looked at Takeru’s face anxiously.

“It’s not surprising for you not to remember it. At that time you were yourself, and yet you weren’t.”

Takeru understood the meaning of her words.

"As Mistilteinn's name suggests, it carries the meaning of 'Mistletoe'. It's a forbidden sword that acts parasitic towards the contractor, and devours their existence... also..."
Mother took a breath, and cautiously said the truth.
"It is the main cause that has led this world to ruin."

“As Mistilteinn’s name suggests, it carries the meaning of ‘Mistletoe’. It’s a forbidden sword that acts parasitic towards the contractor, and devours their existence… also…”

Mother took a breath, and cautiously said the truth.

“It is the main cause that has led this world to ruin.”

“What, impossible…! There’s no way that’s true!”

“The forbidden Magical Heritage called Twilight-Types are something originating from a different world, they are 『Sacred Treasures』 used by otherworldly gods, weren’t you informed of it by that vile maverick… Ootori Sougetsu?”

After hearing the question, the story he heard from Hojishiro Nagare has been revived in his mind.

Sacred Treasure. Something that shouldn’t have been usable by humans, a weapon of gods.

Just as Mother says, Nagare also said not to trust Lapis.

Looks like that story was all true. He understood that from the fact that Mother’s and Nagare’s stories added up.

He could only believe it. Up until now Lapis was an existence acting as his partner. And it was going to eat his existence? Just like her name stated?

She nearly destroyed the world? The weapon he’s been holding up until now?

His thought processes couldn’t keep up, and the pain he felt has gotten worse.

“The Akashic Hazard that triggered the conclusion of the Witch Hunt War 150 years ago. The cause of it, was undeniably Mistilteinn… the sword you are contracted with. If you keep using it, it might lead to another Akashic Hazard. Although Twilight-Type has been effective as a deterring force against Valhalla up until now, with you contracting that sword, that fragile balance has collapsed.”

“…ngh…”

What she said, meant that Takeru and Lapis were something like a trigger for the war to resume.

“Of course, there is not a single reason to blame you. You are a victim. If possible, I would like for you to quietly spend your time in this place… and not to participate in the war.”

Please… like that, Mother appealed to Takeru.

Suddenly, Orochi placed a hand on Takeru’s shoulder. With a wry smile, he faced towards Mother.

“Mom, leave it at that for now. I understand you’re impatient, but that’s too fast. This guy might have been as well thrown in to a different world just a moment ago. If ya suddenly throw these various things at him suddenly, it’s no wonder that he’d be confused.”

Patting Takeru’s repeatedly, Orochi showed some concern.

Mother Goose retracted her body that was leaning forward slightly, and she lowered her

head apologetic.

“I’m sorry… but I can’t afford to do so. Even if I have suddenly came with such a request, and you are unable to understand it…”

Laughing at Mother who lowered her shoulders, Orochi strongly grasped Takeru’s shoulder. Takeru raised his pale face to look at him.

“Hey, Takeru.”

From within his closed eyes, Orochi stared at Takeru.

The intimidation soared high, and Takeru was reminded of the first time he met with Orochi.

Five years ago. In front of Takeru who was unable to protect nor kill Kiseki and stood there stunned, Orochi had appeared. He didn’t comfort him, nor show any sympathy. He grasped Takeru’s hair, making him look at the massacre in front of him, and had it burn into his eyes.

『”——Remember this, Takeru. This is the result of your choice not to choose anything, burn it into your eyes. Don’t try to run away from it.”』

At that time too, a fear like this has enveloped Takeru.

“I don’t think you’re a victim. Four years ago, you ignored myself when I tried to stop you, and have involved yourself with Inquisition. I have no sympathy for you… responsibility lies on you too.”

“…Master.”

“When you separated from me, you declared 『I’ll change the Inquisition, and show you that I can change the world.』, haven’t you?”

Even as Takeru’s pupils shook slightly, he nodded slightly.

“So don’t act spoiled here——you’re the one that has to do something about Mistilteinn. That’s your sword isn’t it. If you’re at the mercy of your sword, then you don’t deserve to use the Double-Edged style’s name.”

His strong self-important voice, was nostalgic to an unpleasant degree.

That’s the *kind* of person Kusanagi Orochi was. He didn’t hesitate neither to kill, nor to protect. He lived by the sword, and would die by the sword. A man who embodies the ideals of Kusanagi Double-Edged style.

His conviction always turned into a sound argument and pierced Takeru’s chest.

“…Orochi, are you really…”

Mother raised her waist, and glared at Orochi.

Orochi had drawn the sword with his free hand, and pointed it towards Mother.

“That’s the kind of person I am, you should be the one to know it best. I might be on Valhalla’s and the witches side now… but my way of life, will be always dictated by the Double-Edged style.”

“…it’s too dangerous. We can’t bet on an unconfirmed, hidden card.”

“Whether it’s confirmed or not. I managed to do it. There is no way this guy won’t be able to.”

Orochi patted Takeru’s head strongly.

Then suddenly, his eyes that lost their light found something in the corner of the room.

“——Hey, come out. You were listening right.”

Everyone except for Mother has faced in the direction Orochi was looking to.

After a while, from the corner of the room there was nothing in, Lapis appeared while making a rustling sound.

“…Lapis.”

Takeru whose headache finally subsided, stood in front of Lapis. He was relived seeing her safe, but at the same time he had a flashback of the re-contract with Lapis.

The hand he stretched out to her stopped.

Lapis didn’t spare him even a glance, and was quietly staring at the floor.

“Have this one tell you the truth by herself. That will convince you right.”

“……”

“Just as Mother said earlier, this one just brings harm to this world… that’s what I think. Honestly, as Valhalla, I think she should be disposed of as soon as possible.”

Fantasy Cult

Takeru raised his face, and put on a bitter expression.

“Don’t worry. Right now, Mother and I have put her disposal on hold. After all, without her magical power your body will break into two parts again. As your master, I don’t want to see my disciple in such state.”

“I too, do not wish for you to lose your life.”

Mother agreed with Orochi, and stared at Takeru.

“Why do you go this far for me? We’ve been killing each other up until now.”

The situation which made it seem like they intended to protect him, made him confused.

Mother smiled gently.

Fantasy Cult

“Valhalla, just like Inquisition, isn’t monolithic. Virtually on the top are the Senate’s elders, but we need to be careful of the pureblood faction… we are split in two. As you can see, we represent the cautious faction… is what I should be saying.”

Embarrassed, Mother was unable to say that they are purebloods.

“We are trying to avoid involving unrelated people with the war… but I have no intention of making excuses. In the name of minimizing the amount of sacrifices, we have assaulted you many times… Nikaido Mari-san, the one who ordered Haunted to dispose of you, was me.”

Mari opened her eyes widely while sitting, but soon after she snorted spitting air, and

faced away.

“…I don’t care, I have no intention to blame or forgive you. I was just an external collaborator after all. I knew that I’m disposable.”

“I too, am in a position where I cannot apologize. However… Haunted’s practices have passed the level of intolerable long ago.”

“Hmph, I’m not interested in that whatsoever. Right now, I have one goal. To return together with Takeru to where our comrades are. Other than that, I don’t care. Whether Valhalla or Inquisition, it’s all the same.”

Fantasy Cu

Mari sat cross-legged and supported her chin with her hand, no one was able to respond to that.

Mother pulled herself together, and turned towards Takeru.

“Let’s return to the main story. As it was said earlier, the disposal of you and Mistilteinn has been put on hold for the time being. However, there isn’t much time left. Unless we obtain evidence that Mistilteinn isn’t a threat to us, you will be executed by the decision of the senate.”

“……”

“If possible, I would like for you to remain here obediently but… it’s true that isn’t enough to give the senate peace of mind.”

There’s no choice, she shook her head and turned her face towards Orochi.

Orochi nodded twice with “uh-huh”, and held Takeru’s head from above.

“And so… *you are to persuade* this magic sword. Have her turn harmless, and prove that she’s a beneficial existence to us.”

“…prove… how…?”

“Nn, to put it simply——”

Orochi put his left hand on his chin, and raising the index finger of his right hand he made an indecent smile.

Takeru knew. Whenever Orochi smiled like that, he never said anything proper.

“——Have her fall for you. Make her madly in love with you to the point she will never disobey you.”

……

……

“……ha?”

When he thought it would be something incredibly serious, abruptly the story has shifted 180 degrees, making Takeru’s thinking stop for a moment.

Chapter 2 - Transience’s Peace

Three days after he woke up.

In the Magic Academy’s general purpose support magic classroom, Takeru was forced to stand next to the teacher.

In front of him were Magic Academy’s students taking lessons… in other words, the seats were occupied by novice sorcerers and witches sitting in rows.

Rather than puzzled, it would be correct to say that everyone stared at Takeru blankly.

“Nn, now the introductions~. This is Kusanagi Takeru-kun~. Yes, applause~.”

Incited by the beaming teacher who started clapping, a few students also applauded. However including Takeru, there were many who didn’t understand the situation.

“Please think of him as of new comrade~. Kusanagi-kun, you too please give us a brief greeting~.”

“…I’m Kusanagi. Nice to meet you.”

The female teacher put a hand on Takeru’s shoulder, who was trembling because of tension.

“They might look at you strangely for a while, but you don’t have to worry~. Having people who do not have magic power isn’t all that rare recently, and I absolutely won’t allow any discrimination because of that in our class~.”

“Yeah…”

When the self-introductions ended with his vague answer, Takeru was told to sit down on the furthest seat and walked to it passing by the students. There were those who looked at him with curiosity, and those who scorned at him, there were roughly just those two reactions.

For Takeru, having this many sorcerers and witches gathered in one place seemed abnormal, but common sense from the outside world didn’t apply here.

Looking from the point of view of the inner world, Takeru was the heretical one.

This is more uncomfortable than I thought it would be…

As for why was Takeru doing self-introductions towards the students of Magic Academy, that story dates back to the conversation they had when he met Mother Goose.

Orochi said ‘make Mistilteinn fall for you’, something that Takeru couldn’t find a meaning in, but simply put, it seemed like he had to deepen his bond with Lapis.

Fantasy Cult

When he digged in further, it seemed like Takeru and Lapis were counted as part of Valhalla, had various restrictions imposed on them, and would be disposed of if they tried to escape.

Mari was furious. “We’re going to go back to our comrades” she said. Of course Takeru felt the same but…

『“Then… what if I said that we already have a way to save Kusanagi Kiseki… would you change your mind?”』

With these words of Mother, Takeru’s heart shook.

『“I’m not saying you need to answer immediately. The stereotypes of the outside worlds built up over 150 years won’t be wiped out that easily, I want you to learn what kind of life we, witches live.”』

She said so, and enrolled Takeru in the Magic Academy.

I want you to learn what kind of beings are witches. I want you to learn what kind of thing is magic.

He could tell she had such intentions but…

In the end, it means that they won’t tell me the way to save Kiseki unless I become their ally…

He wanted to say that was low, but it seemed like originally Mother had sent Orochi in order to prevent Inquisition from turning Kiseki into a weapon. In other words, the one who got in their way were Inquisition and the 35th Platoon. If Inquisition didn’t get in the way in the first place, it’s possible that Kiseki might have been already saved.

Were he to believe in Mother’s words and actions, it would be premature to brand them as “the enemies” of his little sister and comrades.

But, it’s still too early to decide they are our allies. Those people might be aiming to maintain peace… but they have sacrificed people up until now. I need to assess them carefully…

Takeru sat down in his seat, and looked to the side.

Quietly sitting on the seat beside him, by the desk stuck closely to his without any interval, was Lapis.

Although she was clearly standing out, other students weren’t bothered by it whatsoever. When he looked around, sitting beside students he could see a girl and a boy who were dressed similarly to Lapis, and even an old man. They seemed to be Magical Heritages just like Lapis.

It seemed like Magical Heritages with human forms snuggling up to their contractors was a normal sight in here.

“……”

While watching Lapis’ profile, Takeru lost himself in thoughts.

Strengthen his bond with Lapis… making her fall in love for him, just what kind of condition is that.

He had no idea what kind of a result would be satisfactory, but he had to act otherwise he won’t be able to save Kiseki.

…still, what do I do.

Ever since he reunited with Lapis two days ago, she didn't look at Takeru. She was acting as if he didn't exist.

He somehow understood it when they reunited.

That he had been rejected by Lapis.

…why?

Honestly, he had no idea at all.

He looked over his memories. During the battle with Kyouya, Lapis was still acting as usual.

Like that, he assumed it's because of the event that happened afterwards.

I was desperate back then… but did I do something horrible to her…?

Although he tried hard to explore his ambiguous memories, he couldn't find the answer.

…now that I think about it, I don't know anything about her…

All he knew, were things told to him by third parties.

The person in question didn't tell him anything by herself. Until now, he thought of them just as of a sword and its user. He thought that's the correct, ideal way.

But, surely, continuing like that was not good.

They must understand each other, he thought vaguely.

Takeru wanted to know more about Lapis. Not only as his sword, but as his partner… he thought he needs to build a relationship with her as his comrade.

If that happens, the power of the two will without doubt grow and multiply.

That's what he learned through experiences with his comrades from the 35th platoon.

"…hey, Lapis."

Takeru tried to call out to her with as gentle as possible voice, and reached out to Lapis' shoulder.

——**zuzuzuzuzu…**

Dragging her chair with her, Lapis took distance from Takeru.

"…gufuu…!"

An unexpectedly large shock hit Takeru. He didn't think that being hated by his own sword would be this painful.

The students who saw that scene started whispering amongst each other.

"…hey, did you see that? That boy, his own Magical Heritage distanced itself from him…" "Are they fresh after contracting? Also, he was rejected outright wasn't he." "That happens sometimes~… there are people who sexually harass their Magical Heritages. Especially its the ones who don't have much knowledge of magic and training."

“He has a Japanese name, so isn’t he from outside’s old Japan? It’s quite unusual here in the inner world.”

“Hmph, it’s comical to see someone without magic power in possession of a Magical Heritage.”

“Don’t say things like that. It doesn’t seem like she’s a magical catalyst type, if she’s a sword-type, then his skill with sword rather than magic is more important. My idol Kanaria-chan doesn’t hold any magic and yet she’s amazing.”

“But he’s quite interesting. Even though he’s so tall, the Magical Heritage he brought doesn’t match him. It must be quite sharp.”

Everyone started to analyse Takeru in their own way.

The uncomfortable feeling was quite substantial.

I wonder if Mari felt like this the entire time…

While Mari was the only witch in AntiMagic Academy, Takeru was the only ordinary human in Magic Academy, their circumstances were quite similar.

——**bam**

Mari who has been sitting by the window seat, hit her hand with her fist.

Silence, all whispers in the classroom have subsided.

“…we’re in middle of the class.”

As Mari glared at their classmates, everyone looked away from Takeru and faced their desks.

“That’s right~everyone. Right now~, I’m going to teach you protective magic you can use to shield yourself~. You’ll be at a disadvantage if you don’t remember it, so do it properly.”

The teacher has gotten on board of that, and the lesson started. Honestly, Takeru didn’t understand the contents in the least.

Around noon, Magic Academy went into lunch break.

At the same time as Takeru fell on the desk limply, Mari came over with a wry smile.

“Good work, Takeru.”

“Oh, same to you.”

“You seem totally exhausted… well, I can sympathize.”

Mari patted his head, hopped on Takeru’s desk and sat on it.

“…it’s been a while since you have enrolled here, hasn’t it.”

“Yeah. I got used to it, but honestly, I’m still confused. Studying magic, was always something to do in hiding for me.”

“Right. Somehow, I feel like I can understand your standing better after coming here. It’s quite difficult, this kind of thing.”

“…I see.”

Patting her cheek with her finger, Mari showed a troubled reaction.

“Isn’t it more comfortable to you? More than AntiMagic Academy that is.”

When Takeru said so, Mari put on a shocked expression for some reason.

It was as if her expression was saying ‘don’t say such things’.

Mari downcast her eyes awkwardly, and grasped the hem of her skirt.

“I guess. Being a witch is normal in here. But somehow… being here feels unrealistic, or rather, the sense of crisis is fading away… I’m not sure how to put it, but it feels like it’s not the place I belong to.”

“……”

“Where I belong is… um… that place.”

But it might be just my selfish thinking… she said in low a voice, and started to squirm.

Takeru reflected on his words. He didn’t mean to offend her. Currently, Takeru and Mari weren’t neither on the magic or anti-magic side, it was a situation where they couldn’t decide on it.

However, this place was safest and offered Mari decent treatment. Isn’t it the happiest option for Mari to stay in here. Even if war broke out, wouldn’t she be safe in the shelter.

He said that earlier thinking so, but apparently Mari’s feelings were the same as Takeru’s.

“If I stayed here alone, I feel like I would be swallowed by this place. I mean, right now we don’t have the leisure to bother about that right? Getting accustomed and comfortable with the situation… feels somewhat scary.”

“……”

“That’s why… I was really glad that you woke up.”

Saying that, Mari let out a small sob through her nose.

Takeru overlapped his hands over Mari’s on top of the desk.

“This isn’t where we should be… I’ve left you alone for so long, sorry.”

Being thrown into a world that subverted common sense she knew, there’s no way she wouldn’t feel lonely.

He sincerely apologized to Mari, and tried to give her peace of mind.

Mari blushed and her gaze started wandering around.

Takeru didn’t apologize, wasn’t bothered by it, and just said what he wanted to say. He didn’t know what Mari thought when she tightly grasped the hand he overlapped with hers.

“Ah, ummm…aa…uu…I was lonely, I guess? Just a little I wanted to to something like this~I think.”

“? Sure… I don’t mind.”

She must have been really lonely, Takeru thought.

He thought that but… their fingers intertwined. They clearly held hands the same way couples do.

As expected, Takeru couldn’t stop himself from blushing. He couldn’t do something like shaking off her hand. And as the two continued fidgeting while holding hands,

“——Middle schoolers? It’s a middle school couple.”

Before they realized, two female students have crouched in front of the two, and stared at their faces from the desk’s edge.

Mari launched from on top of the desk in surprise.

“Ww-what’s with you! This is just um, palm reading… I was just looking at his palm!”

While Mari attempted to make excuse in a hurry, the short-haired girl from the duo made a bitter smile.

“No no, Mari, rather than making excuses there’s something else you should do right…”

“Classic? She’s a character from a classic book.”

Next to her, a girl with cat ears and a tail which couldn’t be distinguished whether they are real or not, looked curiously at the two and waved her tail. The two started teasing naïve Mari for flirting with Takeru. Mari refuted with a bright red face, but was handled by them splendidly.

Apparently, those two have become friends with Mari over the last month.

Originally Mari was a bright and cheerful girl. In AntiMagic Academy she didn’t have any friends because of stereotypes and discrimination from other students. But there was no reason to discriminate against her here.

Having friends is natural, Takeru thought.

“So you have reunited with Kusanagi? I’m Inia Blackmore. My property is 『Steel』. Born here, in the European shelter. Magic Academy East Side’s second year, one year above you, nice to meet you.”

The girl with short hair, Inia Blackmore held out her hand with a friendly smile.

When Takeru shook hands with Inia, the girl with cat ears beside swung her tail back and forth.

“And I be Ananda Nodens. My property is 『Thunder』. Grew up in the smallest shelter in South Africa. I be in same year and class ya are. As you can see I’m quarter demihuman, but I’m not going to add any ‘nya’s’ at the end of sentences, remember that.”

Sniffing loudly she looked like a catgirl, she bent her tail into a 〈 shape and approached Takeru. Confused, Takeru tried to shake hands with her, but Ananda went “nya!”, and moved away with a scream.

Her hair stood up, and for some reason she looked vigilant. Inia looked at Takeru’s startled expression. When he was upset, Mari whispered into his ear.

“I did the same thing before, but for the cat races shaking their front paws is a display of courtship… they greet each other by entwining fingers or tails.”

“You serious. Eh, so demihumans really exist…”

Takeru was surprised to learn that Ananda’s ears and tail aren’t a decoration.

The Ajin. Called half-beasts, it’s a race of half-humans and half-fantastical organisms. There were records of small cat tribes existing in some areas before, but they were supposed to have gone extinct during the Witch Hunt War.

There was no way Takeru would know what the common sense of demihumans was like. Once again, he realized that in this place, extinct races existing is normal.

Ananda blushed and shyly scratched her face with her front paw.

“…can it be that Kusanagi came from outside too? You seem close with Mari.”

When Inia asked that, he wondered what would be the best answer.

Takeru didn’t know how was the outside world thought of in here.

“Takeru came to the inner side together with me. Our parents are good friends… and when we got involved with Inquisition they sent us here since it’s gotten dangerous.”

Inia and Ananda seemed convinced after Mari told them an improvised explanation she thought of.

“I see, then it’s no wonder you don’t know the common sense of this place. We don’t know much about the outside, but witches are regarded as evil in there right? I imagine it’s an outrageous place.”

“Although I got suddenly scared, if it’s like that then I forgive you. Well done coming here, human. If there’s anything you don’t know, feel free to ask.”

“Fufun”, Ananda spoke like a senior to her junior.

Takeru glanced at Mari beside him who shrugged, and decided to take her up on her words.

“That’s a great help. Then, it might be abrupt but what do you mean by ‘East Side’?”

Since it often appeared in what he heard he thought it’s suspicious, so he asked after hearing Inia say that.

“Seriously, you enrolled without knowing that… amazing.”

“S-sorry.”

As he apologized, Inia went “oh well” and laughed it off. It seems like she has a personality that doesn’t mind the little things.

“East Side, are the eastern part of the shelter where school facilities are. On the other hand, the West Side has its own facilities. Both Magic Academies have their own Chairman, making up two factions, or rather, they have different education policies. East’s policy is 『Harmony』 focusing on defence and healing, as well as industrial magic. Environmental protection and sanctuary’s research is popular in here.”

“On the other hand, the west side’s policy is 『Pure Blood』. Well, you can think of it as of military school. They are teaching strategy and magic useful mainly for military.”

“Make sure not to get close to the West Side. The pureblood’s principle is that mixed races like Ananda are absolutely unacceptable, and that’s nowhere close to the discrimination people without magic power suffer. I don’t know what they might do, but make sure to be careful.”

“Yeah. You should think of east and west sides as of different worlds. Unfortunately the western side is overwhelmingly broad and the highly populated. We don’t fight too often, but since this side has no chance of winning we recommend not to pick a fight with them.”

“The Witch Hunt War is deeply rooted in them I guess… they’re destined to fight with people who don’t have any magic power. Honestly, since we are the generation that was born after the war, we can’t get a good grasp on it. Although, there are those who were raised in environments related to war.”

“There’s a difference in education. Although the education policy has been getting closer

to East Side's recently, majority is still closer to West Side. As soon as the rumour about war appeared, they have started running rampant."

"Yeah. That's the current state of affairs. Especially the recent days, it's not advised to approach it."

Takeru nodded after hearing Inia's advice.

Ananda shook her head saying "good grief" at the current situation.

"Personally I'm not interested in all that. But it's annoying to live here when shelter is in that state, as if we weren't already fed up with problems from outside."

"I would prefer being at peace with people from the outside. There's no fun in being dragged into the war from 150 years ago. After all, we can speak with Kusanagi normally like this thanks to that."

As they alternated explaining, Takeru has slowly began to understand the inner world's reality. In short, it was something like AntiMagic Academy and the Ethics Committee… the conservatives and dissidents.

Just in this shelter were about fifty million people, and a lot more witches and sorcerers seemed to live in other shelters. And most of them, were thinking similarly to how the West Side does.

Mother Goose managed the East Side, and the West Side was managed by purebloods.

Were he to believe in Mother's words, it was obvious that the senate which governed over this inner world came from West Side's population and was closer to them.

…whether inside or outside, it's all the same huh…

Nevertheless, it paled to the overwhelming discrimination as compared to AntiMagic Academy. Even if east and west were polar opposites, people from the East Side were willing to accept Takeru who was a human from the outside and didn't have any magic power. And in the AntiMagic Academy the only ones to accept Mari was a handful of humans from Small Fry Platoon.

The amount of information the outside has about the inner world is nearly equal to none. Although there are rumours of witch forces surviving inside of the Sanctuary, most of the general public doesn't believe that. It was probably because of thorough information control and brainwashing education.

Although people from the inner world were aware of the outside's existence, their recognition when it comes to actual situation was quite shallow. If Inia and Ananda knew about the violence with which Inquisition treats witches, they wouldn't have been so carefree.

"…as I thought, people without any magic power are unusual here aren't they?"

Takeru asked the two.

"Nyaa, there isn't that many, but at least few of them are here on the East Side. Look, there."

He looked in the direction Ananda pointed to.

With her back against the students' lockers, stood a girl with blue hair glaring in their direction.

…*Kanaria.*

Takeru was startled by the very familiar-looking blue hair. When he thought about it, he recalled that he was a prisoner. It was obvious that he'd be monitored.

Also, her gaze had a deep resentment embedded in it. Apparently it's because of the fight last month, and him acting like a senior pupil. Since she wore Magic Academy's uniform instead of the body suit, she must have been a student in here as well.

Inia turned towards Kanaria and prompted her.

"Heey, Kanaria. Don't scowl over there and come over here."

"……hmph."

Even though she was called, Kanaria only snorted and remained standing there with her arms folded.

"She's Kanaria. You see her long ears? She's a half-wood elf.

"Half-wood elf…?"

"Indeed. In exchange for lack of magic power, wood elves' bodily abilities surpassed that of humans. She's living on the East Side mainly for protection."

"……"

"I am a demihuman just like her but… she's from an endangered species. Apparently she's been born of the last wood elf that has survived the war. I don't know the details though."

When he heard that story from Ananda, a memory rushed to Takeru's head.

An incident involving elves was still fresh in his memory.

In the inner world, elves being extinct was a fact as well.

…*no way, right.*…

Although he compared it to what he heard before, first, her age didn't match. Also, he heard that she was disposed of, so it would be funny if she was in Valhalla… the Magic Academy.

Fantasy Cult

Takeru didn't have much information about Ikaruga's failed elf.

Ikaruga hated prying into her matters, and he also avoided digging into it as much as possible.

However, it was a fact that it bothered him. Takeru stood up and was about to go to ask Kanaria about it, but then Inia called out to him again.

"By the way Kusanagi… where did your Magical Heritage go?"

She posed an unexpected question.

"You had an azure girl with you right? I wanted to ask about her too but… she disappeared the moment lessons finished. Is it fine to leave your Magical Heritage alone?"

“Oh, I was curious about the same thing. Where did you obtain a Magical Heritage? Is it something passed down from generation to generation in your family? I felt a tremendous and alien magic power from it. She caught my eyes since I study Magical Heritages… anya?”

After saying that much, Ananda and Inia looked at Takeru’s pale face. He looked towards Mari.

Mari shook her head energetically saying “I don’t know?!”, then next he looked at Kanaria in the back.

“…a-awawawa…”

Kanaria’s face paled just like Takeru’s.

Five minutes later.

“——Idiot idiot idiot!! Even though you’re her contractor! Why did you let her get out of your sight?!”

Kanaria, Takeru and Mari were sprinting together through Magic Academy looking for Lapis’ whereabouts.

“I’m ashamed…! I’ve gotten used to the situations where she’s there yet she’s not, and didn’t notice it when she suddenly disappeared!”

“No excuses! Have some shame!”

Takeru who has been showered with jeers from Kanaria, who was running beside him on his right, turned smaller and smaller.

Mari who was running on his left flared up on Kanaria instead.

“You’re not the one to say that Kana-chan! You’re supposed to monitor them and yet you let her out of your sight!”

“S-shut up! Mari has been asked to act as the monitor by Mother as well! You’re same! Guilty!”

“I have no obligation to follow your orders! Why do I have to watch over Takeru who’s my comrade!”

“Not Takeru! Michir…mistera… mi… ah come onnn.”

Kanaria continued to bite her entangled tongue, and ran while scratching her head strongly.

The three continued to search avoiding the students, not bothered by the fact that they were conspicious to other students. Mari started running late, and because of either time difference or luck, a man clad in kimono walking down the hallway had come into their sight.

“Ohh, whash, whacha guys dyoin?”

It was Orochi. He walked towards them with anpan in his right hand and milk in his left.

Takeru who was in front stopped, and placed hands on his knees in front of Orochi.

“Master, why are you here?”

“Why you ask, I’m one of the teachers in here.”

“Ha?”

“I’m in charge of physical education. Haa, Mom won’t shut up and continues to repeat that I should work if I live in here.”

Teaching physical education using Double-Edged style’s basics. That’s definitely not basic level is it.

“Rather than that, why are you in such a hurry.”

“Actually… I lost sight of Lapis.”

Takeru admitted his blunder and prepared himself to get beaten up.

However, Orochi just continued to eat the anpan with a blank look.

“Issat sho. Well, do your besht.”

“…eEehh?!”

“A Magical Heritage won’t do any harm unless the contractor uses it. And you’re wearing the collar too, there’s no need to panic that much.”

“Won’t you look for it together with us?!”

“? That’s your sword isn’t it, why do I have to do something like that. Also, I have a class now, I don’t waaant to.

……what ‘I don’t waaant to’ dammit.

Even as blood vessels appeared on his temple, Takeru smiled and swallowed the voice of his heart.

“Orochi!! That’s why Kana was against it! It’s impossible for a guy like this to master Misuchalachein!!”

Kanaria went past them at high speed.

“Zehh… haa… haa… haeehh…”

In addition, Mari slowly followed her.

“Hohoo, nice to see you energetic again. Youth is truly wonderful.”

Hearing Orochi speak nonchalantly, Takeru couldn’t even smile wryly. He has already forgotten, but the man called Kusanagi Orochi was basically a no-good adult.

He gave up on obtaining Orochi’s cooperation, and started running again.

“——Oi, wait a sec.”

“Guehh!!”

But, Orochi immediately grasped Takeru’s collar and restrained his neck.

“W-what are you doing really…!”

“I’ll give you an advice. Did you have to look for your beloved sword before, even a single time?”

“…eh?”

“She always responded your call, and appeared right beside you spontaneously on her own. In other words, she always knows your whereabouts. In that case, it wouldn’t be surprising if it worked the other way around as well.”

Orochi turned his face towards Takeru while drinking his milk.

Rather than in thoughts, he seemed just amazed.

“Looks like for the time being the sword’s affection to you is stronger. Seems like the erosion is one-sided.”

“……”

“I’m not saying that you have to trust them, but what kind of swordsman you are without a sword.”

He said so, poked Takeru’s forehead with his fist, let go of his neck and started walking.

“Have some sha~ameee.”

Orochi waved his hand and left.

Takeru was unable to respond and just looked at his back. Whether she’s a Magical Heritage or a Sacred Treasure, the fact that Lapis is a sword didn’t change.

Geez, I was unable to refute in the least.

“…that guy never changes.”

Takeru quietly lowered his head towards Orochi’s back, and listening to his heart he headed to where Lapis was.

Not hurrying, Takeru followed the haze in the depths of his heart, feeling that it connected him to Lapis, and went up the stairs.

Surely, their connection has become stronger thanks to the re-contract.

After he went to the top of the stairs, he pushed a heavy iron door open.

Light wind stroked his cheek, and naturally Takeru’s gaze was attracted to the sky. He squinted faintly at the gentle light blocked by the ultraviolet protection barrier.

The sky wasn’t too broad, but it had a colour that couldn’t be seen on the outside.

Light was diffused into pale colours of the rainbow. And inside of the barrier’s membrane were flying flocks of crows with three tails.

The buildings and various grounds were flying randomly arranged, but they never colided.

While the buildings were full of various machinery, on top of their roofs lush plants could be seen.

Since magic power was harmless for nature, the greenery was lively.

Although he was shocked seeing that sight in the night when he woke up, it was a fantastic

and beautiful sight when seen in daytime. Because it’s been referred to as the country of witches, he thought it would be full of ominous things, but that wasn’t the case at all. He felt as if he was inside of a picture book.

Takeru took a deep breath, and turned his gaze in front of him.

He saw an azure-coloured of a person sitting on the edge of the roof that had no fence.

Lapis’ hair was fluttering in the wind, making her back seem smaller than usual, she looked lonely sitting there alone. Next to her, he could see a large amount of apples packed in a paper bag.

On the quiet rooftop, the only sound was coming from Lapis munching on the apples.

She matched the beautiful landscape, but her back looked incredibly lonely.

Takeru approached her in silence, and immediately sat down next to her.

“Yo. Eating lunch alone? If you’re going somewhere tell me beforehand.”

“……”

“Woah, this is insanely high. Since I can’t fly unlike other students, it’s quite scary.”

“……”

“……y-you’re eating apples huh. That’s a lot of them. Give me on——”

hyop*……*zuzuzuzuzu

When Takeru reached out towards the apples, Lapis picked up the paper bag and took distance from him.

With his arm still stretched out, Takeru seemed as if he’s going to cry from shock.

Lapis stared far into the distance and continued to munch on the apples.

Takeru curled up and spat out a grand sigh.

“…hey, isn’t about time you told me the reason?”

“(*munch* *munch* *gnaw* *gnaw*)”

“I am fully aware that I’m insensitive but… did I do something to you? I don’t remember what happened back then too well.”

“(*munch* *munch* *munch* *gnaw*)”

“There’s a lot I want to ask you, but if I did something then I would like to properly apologize. At least let me hear your voice.”

“(*munch* *munch*… *crunch* *crunch* *crunch* *crunch* *gulp*)”

“……don’t eat the cores as well.”

Lapis didn’t pay attention to him and took out another apple.

Takeru scratched his cheek and smiled wryly seeing Lapis distance herself.

“When stomach is filled, depression subsides… huh.”

When he said that while looking up at the sky, Lapis stopped eating the apple for a moment.

“Certainly, that’s what your previous host said right? It’s a wise saying.”

Lapis didn’t answer, she moved the apple away from her mouth, wrapped it with both of her hands, held it against her belly as if it was important to her and looked in the distance.

“But, that means I have made you feel unpleasant after all.”

“……”

“…I have hurt you… right?”

Not looking in Takeru’s direction, Lapis slowly opened her mouth.

“Hurt… there’s no confirmed scratches on the blade, so you don’t have to worry.”

It’s been the first time in a while since he heard Lapis’ voice, as usual there was no intonation.

However, somehow there was some kind of feeling of rejection in there.

The thinking circuits of a human and a Magical Heritages are different. The things that hurt humans aren’t the same as ones that hurt Magical Heritages. Sometimes there’s trouble in understanding their behaviour and actions.

When Takeru was together with Lapis, it wasn’t as if he didn’t doubt her attitude.

Until now he had no intention of butting in. What Takeru looked for was a relationship of a sword and its user, and Lapis was the same.

But they should be able to understand each other if they try.

After all, he could feel Lapis' heart better than ever before.

"If you're asking if I can bear the mental burden, then you do not have to worry about that as well. I am a Magical Heritage, I do not suffer mental traumas like humans do."

"There's no way that's true. I think you've got considerable pride, and you've been jealous before too."

"I wonder what are you talking about."

"…compared to others, aren't you quite obstinate?"

"I don't think there is any need for further interference, after all you aren't my host no longer."

Not her host. Hearing her say that, Takeru frowned.

"…what do you mean by that?"

"Just like I said. You have let go of me. That's all."

"Let go of… I don't remember anyth――"

After he said up to there, a memory has flowed inside of Takeru's head along with noise.

The moment he was trying to commit double suicide together with Kiseki, he certainly let go of Lapis.

He resolved himself to resist everything, however, the only way to do it was to abandon the choice of killing Kiseki.

"Have you remembered?"

"No, back then I didn't really have intention of discarding you…"

"It is the same thing to me. I do not intend to blame you really. I was not worthy enough as an instrument fulfilling your wish. That is all."

After just saying that, she started to eat another apple.

In other words, Lapis interpreted it as being abandoned and had turned timid.

I thought so before already, but she has her cute parts after all. Takeru thought.

At the same time, he felt lonely since she wouldn't call him her host.

"…but, our contract hasn't been cut. Even now, I'm still alive."

"I'm a Magical Heritage, and so my fighting force is minuscule alone making me vulnerable, it can be called practically nonexistent. Currently, my current status is that of Valhalla's captive, so it's not a good idea to cancel the contract immediately."

"……"

"That is all."

This is how being abandoned by one’s partner felt.

Even though he had no such intention, it was true that he let go of her back then.

Takeru bowed to her obediently.

“I’m really, really sorry.”

“There is no need to apologize, I should have said so already.”

“No, I am the one at fault. I have arbitrarily forced my wishes on you, then selfishly abandoned that wish. It’s true that I have no excuse to you, who got disappointed by my indecisiveness.”

Saying a heartfelt apology, Takeru leaned towards Lapis.

“That’s why at the very least, please give me another chance.”

“Why is that. I should be no longer necessary to you.”

“No, I need you that’s why I say it.”

“For self-protection, is it. Or maybe for Kusanagi Kiseki’s sake, I wonder.”

“That’s not all. As a swordsman, and as a human being I don’t want to let go of you.”

“…as a human being?”

“Yeah, I want to think of you as of my comrade.”

Although what he said were his true feelings, Lapis tilted her head puzzled.

“I should have said already that I’m a Magical Heritage.”

“I know that. And I as a human, don’t want to let go of you.”

“I don’t understand.”

“No such thing.”

“……”

“As your partner I… want to know more about you.”

With a serious expression, Takeru conveyed his feelings to her.

For the first time after coming to Magic Academy, Lapis looked at Takeru.

The azure hair swayed as the wind blew.

“Even if you know, what will you do. I think it’s meaningless.”

“There is a meaning. It’s something necessary for me to stay beside you.”

“…I don’t understand it too well, but I will answer your question. Since I have already left management of Inquisition, the restriction on speaking has been removed.”

As usual, she was expressionless.

However, to Takeru, that appearance of hers displayed sadness.

In an incredibly distant location with nothing in it, standing alone in the ruined world,

such an image of hers appeared in his head. Unconsciously he stretched out his hand, wanting to relay to her that he's right beside.

He held down the strange impulse, and asked what he wanted to hear from her.

"Is it true that you are a Sacred Treasure, a product of another world?"

First, he asked the question that approached his heart first.

Surprisingly, Lapis simply responded.

"Yes. It is true. World's identification number 1023, in other words, I was manufactured in world of myths, a different dimension referred to as Norse Mythology in this world."

Although he was told that before, it would be a lie to say that he received no shock.

"…then why do you exist in this world? Even if summoning magic was used, there shouldn't be enough supply of magic in the present to do so."

"The reason is unknown. My information of Norse mythology's world has been damaged. At the same time, what could be called my personality has appeared after I came to this world… to be more precise, it's something that was born at the end of the Witch Hunt War."

"……"

As Takeru took a breath, Lapis responded indifferently.

"With 98% probability, the world of Norse mythology no longer exists. For some reason it has been destroyed. At present, it's impossible to contact the world of Norse mythology via summoning, which adds credibility to the hypothesis."

Destruction of a mythological world… it was something he never heard of before.

However, Lapis didn't say any lies. Now that their connection has grown stronger, he could tell that immediately.

"…that you drove this world to ruin… and caused the Akashic Hazard (Invisible Disaster), true?"

"Strictly speaking, that's wrong. Akashic Hazard (Invisible Disaster) was not caused by me alone, a collision with another Twilight Type——another Sacred Treasure has caused it."

"Another Sacred Treasure?"

"A magical sword called Lævateinn that holds the same god-slaying power as I do. Although it lost most of its capability, it has been confirmed to be in hands of Valhalla (Fantasy Cult)."

"…then, Inquisition and Valhalla (Fantasy Cult) have used you and Lævateinn, and caused that disaster?"

"When the two God Hunter Forms clashed, my 『Twilight』 magic property and Lævateinn's 『Destruction』 magic property intermingled during collision, there was an outbreak of 『Void』 magic property, which has covered the world."

It was a surreal story.

Both Inquisition and Valhalla (Fantasy Cult) possessed Sacred Weapons which were their ultimate weapons. And when Valhalla used Lævateinn, Inquisition used Mistilteinn to counter it.

Because two weapons of mass destruction were used against one another, the world fell to

ruin.

It was a horrifying story.

“In the end, who won?”

“We have partially destroyed Lævateinn and inflicted a serious injury to its contractor, but if one were to look at the result, then it would be a draw.”

“What happened to your previous host?”

“……”

“……?”

“She lost control of the God Hunter Form, went berserk and died.”

Takeru didn’t miss the short pause before Lapis spoke.

Since it was important to learn details of the God Hunter Form, he absolutely had to learn it.

“That host, what kind of person was it?”

“……?”

“I’m interested what kind of person has fought together with you. To handle you, it must have been someone considerably skilled right?”

“The host’s skill was not as good as yours. However, it’s true that it was a strong person.”

“And name?”

When Takeru asked her, Lapis looked at Takeru with her pupils that looked like marbles.

“Kusanagi Mikoto. She was of the same lineage as you, in other words, a woman of Kusanagi household.”

For a moment, he was surprised to the point where his heart almost stopped and he lost his voice.

Kusanagi Mikoto. He never heard of her, but if that person was a woman…

“You said she was a woman? Just now, surely!”

“Yes, I said that.”

“Then she should have been in the same state as Kiseki!”

“No, it wasn’t the same at all. Although she suffered from her own power, but she wasn’t constantly going out of control.”

Takeru approached Lapis mercilessly, and grasped her shoulder.

150 years ago meant it was four generations of Kusanagi family in the past.

The power of 『Hyakki Yakou』 might not have been as great as it is now, still, it should have been impossible to restrain that power by oneself. And above all, it was a tradition for Kusanagi family to kill children born as women as they are born, unless something out of ordinary happened she shouldn’t have been alive.

“Please tell me about that person! There might be a clue about how to save Kiseki!”

Desperately, Takeru questioned Lapis.

But that’s when the door has been opened vigorously.

Kanaria appeared from behind the doors, her shoulders raised and lowered down roughly.

“Haa… haa… you… what are you doing…!”

“What you ask, I was just talki….”

“You’re eating apples in a place like this instead of searchinggg!!”

Kanaria ran towards Takeru.

“Wa-wait, wait a moment! I was searching and found he——eehhh…?”

He looked back to confirm Lapis was there, but even though he was holding her shoulder, she was nowhere to be seen. Only the paper bag with apples was left behind.

“No wai?! Wait, just now she was——”

“CHOooyaahhhhh!”

Kanaria ran towards him and attacked him with a flying kick.

He would die if he took her straight man act poorly, so he averted his body to avoid it.

“Ah.”

Because he avoided, Kanaria’s jump continued and has directly fell down from the roof. She dived from the rooftop that was easily 500 metres above the ground.

Takeru caught Kanaria's hand in a hurry, but the unstoppable momentum carried him and he also dived down from the roof.

"NOoottt gooooooood!"

He entangled with Kanaria whose eyes were full tears in her eyes and they fell down to the ground together.

Honestly, he didn't think that he would die in such a dull way. Even though he finally shook off his indecisiveness, to think the curtain drop of his life would come from the wood elf's flying kick.

In order to have at least Kanaria survive, Takeru hugged her and inverted their bodies, trying to move under her.

"?! Don't touch my breasts baldy!!"

"It's not time for th——guohh!!""

Kanaria launched an elbow into his solar plexus. Why do I have to to be called a baldy and beaten up while doing acrobatics in a situation like this. "I've had enough" Takeru muttered with tears in his eyes.

But that's when Kanaria grasped his collar.

In middle of the fall she grabbed onto the edge of the school's window and hung on it. Although Takeru's neck let out a crack in response to sudden stop, their fall stopped and both of them were safe.

Wood elves were nimble and had superhuman strength, but that was already beyond their level.

Kanaria was fuming as she glared at Takeru.

"I'll report this to Mother… I'll make it so you can't walk around freely, so prepare yourself…!"

Then, Kanaria swung Takeru's body with abandon, throwing him into the school building.

At the end of the violent rescue, the school's students directed strange looks at him as he shed miserable tears on the floor full of glass from the shattered window.

Chapter 3 - Lapis Lazuli

Unlike at AntiMagic Academy, Magic Academy's also had afternoon classes.

Although there was no need to earn points as part of the test platoon, everyone was supposed to regularly announce the fruits of their magic's improvement. Although you won't get expelled if you don't do so, you will be held back if the results aren't acknowledged. Since Takeru was a student of Magic Academy for the time being, he was asked to submit an article on magic for the final exam. Of course, since he had no intention of staying there that long, he only had to withstand the classes somehow.

Currently, it was time after school.

Takeru, unfamiliar with desk work stretched his shoulders rotating his arms.

"Taa~keru~."

Mari approached him in a strangely good mood. Also, behind her were Inia and Ananda.

"Oh, what's up you three?"

"Since there's an opportunity, we thought of guiding you around the East Side's town. It's better if you know it right?"

She placed her hands on the desk and proposed.

Takeru was a little unsure, but it would be difficult to extract any more information from Mother or Orochi, and it wouldn't hurt to know more about Magic Academy.

He whispered a question into Mari's ear.

"Can Lapis come with us?"

While saying so, he glanced to the seat beside his. Lapis faced forward and wasn't moving.

"I don't mind really… what happened, you two? Aren't you quite cold ever since coming here?"

"No… well."

Takeru made an awkward expression, and stared at Mari apologetically.

After getting Mari's consent, they have immediately headed outside, that's when,

"No you won't. You absolutely can't go outside. Kana won't allow it."

Kanaria folded her arms in front of her chest, moved beside them and glared at Takeru.

She reported what happened at the roof to Mother trying to take away Takeru's freedom, but has been dismissed and now was acting defiant.

Mari ignored Kanaria, raised her arms and with "let's go!" left the classroom.

"Don't ignore me! Listen to what I say!"

Kanaria grabbed Mari's shoulder with a serious expression. Takeru thought that as Mother's subordinate, it was obvious for her not to allow them go outside.

Annoyed by her, Mari turned around.

"Ah shut up. It's fine as long as you come with us right? Just say clearly that you don't want to be left behind."

"Unlike you, Kana is busy! It's not like I want to play around with yo——"

"Yes yes, I get it, yeah. I'll treat you to a bag of your favourite candies."

"——It can't be helped if you insist that much. Kana will comply and come with you."

Momentarily Kanaria also raised her arms with a "let's go!".

So weak!

Takeru wondered if it's really fine for Kanaria to be won over so fast, and turned towards Lapis.

"Lapis, let's go."

"……"

He reached out to her.

Lapis slowly raised her face, and looked at Takeru's hand.

However, she didn't take his hand and instead stood up beside them without making any sound.

Not knowing what to do, Takeru put a hand his cheek with his finger and followed her.

The sun was already sinking down when Takeru and the others looked up at the magical world from the ground.

"…awesome."

Although the buildings floating in the air looked incredibly impressive, what caught their eyes was the appearance of witches flying in the sky. Flying on chopstick-like things as fast as falling stars, their appearance was more interesting than any show.

He was impressed by the fact that none of them clashed against each other.

"Mari, can you fly in the sky like that too?"

"『Aurora』 is very versatile so it's easy for me to fly. As long as they have that band-type catalyst, I think every witch should be able to do it. For me it's easy to fly even without it though."

"…that's nice. Really nice."

Takeru's eyes were sparkling unusually. He was the type of man who always longed to fly on a fighter or helicopter.

Mari looked at excited Takeru's profile.

"…want to try flying together? It should be possible if you sit behind me."

“Two people can get on it?!”

“Two people getting on isn’t that unusual… well, mostly it’s done by c-couples though…”

While scratching her cheek, Mari continued to glance at Takeru. Ananda and Inia next to them started grinning.

“Ananda and I will follow you from behind, we’ll make sure not to get in your way~.”

“Mhm. *Avec* flying it is. Wshoo wshoo it is.”[1]

“I-I don’t really have any intentions like that!”

Mari rushed at the two in anger. The person in question, Takeru, was looking at the sky happily and ignored the talk about couples.

And as everyone chatted peacefully,

“Of course you can’t go. You’re prohibited from flying.”

Kanaria came up from behind and stabbed a nail in.

Mari puffed up her cheeks and whispered into Kanaria’s ear.

“Why, cheapskate.”

“Kana has no magic power. Can’t fly. Can’t monitor you. So you can’t.”

“~~~~……then why don’t you just sit behind Lapis-chan.”

Mari pointed at Lapis who came together with them, following Takeru a slight distance away.

“Lapis, can you fly too?”

“It is possible, but I refuse.”

It was an immediate answer. Lapis looked away.

“I don’t want to use my magic power for anyone else other than my contractor.”

“…mm, then if I sit behind you and Kanaria sits behind Mari there should be no problem right?”

“Yes yesss! There is ! There is a problem!”

Raising her hand, Mari desperately protested.

Her expression seemed to say ‘I’ll be the one to carry Takeru’.

While Mari’s gaze one-sidedly scattered sparks, Lapis moved over to stand beside Takeru.

And, **plop**, she stuck closely to Takeru and pulled his arm to her chest, hugging him.

“?! Y-you…! I wasn’t bothered by that earlier, but isn’t that quite an attack… from now I’m going start looking at you as a woman!!” enemy

Pointing her finger at Lapis, Mari made a declaration of unknown meaning.

Takeru looked down at Lapis who clung to his arm, and with a finger on his cheek he smiled.

“Wai… Takeru?! Why do you look a little happy?!”

“No… because she kinda avoided me ever since we came here, it’s true that I’m a little happy to interact with her as usual.”

“You’re happy?! Y-y-you lolicon!”

“Don’t misunderstand, she’s umm… something like my partner. If I’m hated by her there will be a lot of problems…”

“P-partner…? Life partner…? I can’t win if it’s like that!”

“Don’t add ‘life’ in there on your own… what kind of match are you having here? Why do you have tears in your eyes?”

“UuuuUUuuuUu! I don’t know you any more!”

Mari turned around with a twirl.

Although he meant that they were fighting together as partners like those in a three-legged race, that seemed to have led to further misunderstanding. Not understanding anything, Takeru had a blank look on his face.

Ananda and Inia had already entered the box with catalysts, and brought out the brooms.

“Mari~, you are at an disadvantage against a Magical Heritage. After all, Magical Heritage and the contractor are connected at all times.”

‘Mhm. Well, don’t worry. Magical Heritage and the contractor are two different beings. They can’t get married and she can’t get pregnant, you can still aim for the wife’s position.”

Inia and Ananda comforted Mari.

“Co-connected… Takeru, that’s lewd!”

“Wait wait, why are you blaming me?! Inia and Ananda too, don’t talk things that lead to misunderstandings! Lapis and I aren’t like that!”

“No, isn’t worth teasing Mari? That frustrated expression on her face is so thrilling.”

“Mhm. Despite her top class grades, she’s so cute when teased. I love it.”

As the two keenly displayed their sadistic affection, twitch blood vessels appeared on Mari’s cheek. Her fist let out a sound as she approached them.

“Who the hell’s a teasable character…!”

“Oh, look Ananda, Mari’s angry. How about we play some tag then.”

“Ohh, a race huh. Let’s go at it. But there’s no way Mari will ever catch up to my

『Thunder』 element with her hopeless driving.”

“Kufufu”, Ananda laughed, and at the same type from the catalyst’s booster magic akin to lightning has been ejected. She rose up to the sky at great speed, and flew away like a meteor.

“Wait up! Damn, I’ll use them to dispel this mood! Kana-chan hurry up and get on!”

Mari pulled out the catalyst from the box, and sat astride it.

“Wait! Kana didn’t allow it! Don’t just go flying on your own!”

“It’s fine, get on!”

“I’m definitely not gett… waa.. uwah, don’t touch me… don’t pull me… I’ll fly at this raaaaa~~~~!”

Mari grabbed Kanaria’s collar and flew away like that.

Takeru looked worriedly at the two who flew away, but then he dropped his line of sight at Lapis who was clinging to his arm. This feeling was nostalgic to him. Since she was always sticking to him, although it might sound strange, he felt at ease like this.

“Why are you laughing?”

“…what I told Mari earlier was true. Being avoided by you was very painful to me.”

“Please do not misunderstand.”

Lapis moved away from his arm.

“My action from just now was caused by the fact I felt your life is in danger.”

“My life is in danger… there was no situation like that right?”

“You will understand soon.”

While saying so, Lapis too, took out a catalyst from the box.

And bothered by her skirt, she sat astride it.

“Are you not going to get on?”

“…ah, yeah. Sure.”

Following Lapis, he straddled the rear seat. The belt expanded automatically, wrapping itself around his waist.

It was a strangely surreal sight like that of a small girl extending over a bike, and in addition to that, a large man rode in the back looking slightly pathetic.

“I shall start. Please hold on.”

As he was told to, he awkwardly held Lapis’ waist.

“Flying by using the catalyst lacks stability. Since it’s dangerous, please hold me with your arms as if you were to hug me.”

“…y-yes…”

Then once again as he was told to, Takeru threw his arms around Lapis’ back.

This is really inviting a misunderstanding…

No matter how one looked at it, he looked like a pervert hugging a small girl from behind. As he touched her like that, he thought she's just a normal girl. Her body temperature wasn't human, he felt softness as he wound his arms around her stomach.

And he felt a soft scent similar to lavender.

"We're going."

"——DowAah!!"

Immediately after the declaration, the catalyst suddenly accelerated.

Takeru's consciousness was taken in by the sweet scent, resulting with him hurting his neck at the sudden acceleration.

The feeling of tearing through the wind can be enjoyed even on a bicycle.

However, the feeling of becoming wind itself can't be tasted that easily.

Takeru enjoyed the sight of scenery rapidly flowing and the act of flying itself.

They had considerable speed. He is accustomed to using Soumatou for high speed combat, so he didn't think this kind of speed was that incredible, but since usage of Soumatou slowed down his surroundings rather than than speeding him up, it was different from high-speed flight.

Magic-Sweeping Sword
Magic-Sweeping Sword

Lapis slipped between the buildings as if it was a roller-coaster, rose up and dived repeatedly. However, it wasn't as if she was trying to entertain Takeru, instead she was chasing after Mari and the others who used such a random route.

Both people who used catalysts like them, and those walking on the ground weren't surprised by Takeru and the others flying. It was a part of everyday life for them.

They flew grazing the ground, and soared up on the verge of collision with a building.

And then they steadily climbed up aiming for the sky.

After they almost reached the barrier, Lapis decreased the flight speed.

As they looked below, the world of magic has spread beneath them.

It was different spectacle from what could be seen from roof. The floating buildings too, were all below them.

"Amazing…!"

With a very boyish smile, Takeru watched the world below.

For Takeru who didn't have any hobbies and devoted his life to swordsmanship, part time jobs and platoon activities, it was the first time he was able to enjoy the landscape in a long time.

It might be cliché, but he felt that was truly what it meant to become a bird.

"Even though it's called a shelter, it's really broad."

Looking from one end to the other, Takeru raised a voice of admiration.

However, outside of the barrier spread a decaying world. A dead desert called Sanctuary. Although it was invisible, that place was full of 『Void』 magic that killed people in an instant.

The scar on the world created by the Witch Hunt War.

"……"

If war starts, will this beautiful world and my own world turn out just like the outside of the barrier. Takeru who was immersed in the fantastic scenery has been pulled back to reality.

Now that he thought about it, he came a long way. At first he was just a student, he only aimed to graduate from AntiMagic Academy to become an Inquisitor. He involved himself with the platoon members, and after many twists and turns they became comrades. 'We're going to do our best together and become Inquisitors', that's what he thought.

Everything has changed…

Takeru held Lapis' body a bit more strongly.

"Hey, you… what do you think of this world?"

"What do you mean?"

"Magic Academy. The outside and inner world, do they look different to you?"

Fantasy Cult

"Magic-based Valhalla, and Inquisition that bases on science and guns. Although the organization and elements it bases on are different, I think they are not much different. The controlling outside, and inside that's better at security. The difference in strength is unknown. Although Inquisition probably has an advantage when it comes to numbers, Valhalla's forces are stronger individually. If war happens, it will definitely come to a stalemate."

Fantasy Cul

Noticing Takeru's amazed expression, Lapis looked away to the side.

"What is it."

"That's not what I meant… about people who live here, and how different are they from people outside is what I was asking."

"If it's the difference between witches and normal humans, then explanation is simple."

"…never mind it."

Takeru sighed and looked at the streets below again.

"Both us and witches are living normally. I thought so back then about Mari, but with Ananda and Inia I was reminded that they are no different from the bunch outside."

"……"

"…if it was this place, even if I brought our comrades and Kiseki, they would be able to live without being inconvenienced."

He recalled Orochi's and Mother's solicitation and squinted.

Takeru never thought of what to do to save the entirety of humanity, or why did the war

happen, not bothering himself with the difficult topics.

From the bottom of his heart, he wasn't interested in such things. If they want war then they can just do it on their own, he was fine with just leaving those people he didn't understand to their own devices.

All he wanted, was to protect people around him.

It didn't matter to him whether he lived outside or inner world. As long as there's peace in there, Takeru didn't mind it.

Were I bring my comrades and Kiseki here, living here together wouldn't be that bad, Takeru thought.

"You too Lapis, would be able to live here normally. There's a bunch of humanoid Magical Heritages, it wouldn't be uncomfortable like this right?"

Fantasy Cult

"Whether it's Inquisition or Valhalla it does not matter. Inquisition was a well-equipped temporary accommodation. I don't mind where I am as long as it's beside the contractor who can use me."

"…so it's like that."

"That's how it is. I'm satisfied as long as I am used by a contractor. The greatest humiliation for us, Magical Heritages is when we are no longer of any use to our contractors."

…so she's still angry after all.

While the Magical Heritage's ambitions might have been just as Lapis told said they are, but he still felt it was a little lonely. Whether she has a human form or not, it would be awkward to use her like a simple object.

Even if they are a sword and its user, Takeru wanted it to be partners that trust each other.

"Like I said on the roof already, I have no intention to discard you."

"Then why, have you let go of me in that place?"

"That's… because I didn't want to kill Kiseki. I decided not to kill, but to protect everything."

"Is it fine then for me to grant you that wish now?"

"…no, don't go and fulfil it on your own, I want us to fight together and fulfil it… we're partners right?"

"My apologies, but I have no intention of being at mercy of your constantly-changing wishes. I'll pass on being discarded again."

Unexpectedly, the scar was real deep.

He knew for a while that she had strange reactions like being jealous of bashful, but he also realized that Magical Heritages valued different things from humans.

And Lapis was without a doubt the type to hold a grudge. Somehow, it felt like a couple's quarrel to him.

“I said I’m not going to discard you… I apologize for the change of heart, but there’s also a misunderstanding.”

“Even if that was just a change of heart for you, for me it was the rejection of fusion between me and the contractor, that is enough for me to lose trust in you.”

“…that God Hunter, is it fusion? Not only erosion?”

“Yes. It’s a fusion with the contractor’s soul. You will quit being human, and after fusing with me you will transition into an existence from another dimension. And with that, you shall obtain power to slaughter gods.”

“…I don’t really get it, but what does that mean to you?”

Lapis went silent for a moment as if she were thinking about it, and answered indifferently.

“Hmm. If I were to represent it in a way easy for humans to understand——it would be synonymous with sex.”

“Nn? What?”

“Sex. A sexual activity. Expressing it from the human point of view, it would be as if we kissed making mood, took off our clothes and at the moment ‘come on, let’s start’ should come, you said 『Your body is too poor so I can’t get erect, goodbye——”

“Wait wait wait waittt! Is that something akin to what lovers do?!”

Hearing that, he understood that what Ananda and Inia said was entirely correct, and he received quite the shock.

“For us Magical Heritages, that’s what it means. If for living organisms their ultimate goal is to produce offspring, Magical Heritage’s final goal is to fuse with their contractor.”

“…you serious.”

After being told that, his mood changed, and he started feeling pathetic as a man.

“Please don’t mind it. In human terms, 『It’s my fault we can’t do it, I’m not attractive enough. It’s not your fault.』 is what I should say.”

“…please, could you stop putting it in human perspective. I beg you.”

It hurt him being told he’s something akin to ‘impotent’. Takeru covered his face with both hands.

“But well… I think it’s a bit different from fusion after all. I know that you are trying to fulfil my wish, but my wish is mine. I’m happy with you only helping me to fulfil it, or rather, I want to fulfil it together with you.”

“The result of wish coming true is the same. I don’t understand what is different in there. If you just leave your wishes to me, everything will be settled nicely. Your thinking or wishes are unnecessary in there.”

“……”

“I should have already said that I’m a weapon that fulfils contractor’s wishes.”

Lapis flatly declared. Takeru thought that it was way too one-sided. The human mind is not that simple. Having one's wish granted against their will was something very painful.

Just like Kiseki's body has done it…

Having your wish one-sidedly fulfilled wasn't a fusion, but erosion.

Takeru hugged Lapis, and put his chin on top of her head.

"Somehow, you seem similar to me after all."

"Haa?"

"…'ha?'…hey, why do you look a bit displeased. That hurts."

"Since you said words far beyond my expectations, I unconsciously did that. My apologies, but I'm not as indecisive as you are."

"I hear no respect in there whatsoever. That's not what I meant, in past I never thought of other people and was someone who just pushed forward like a suicide bomber. When I look at you now, it doesn't feel like somebody else's problem. Humans are not so simple you know?"

"I have no intention of understanding humans. I have no intention of understanding you."

"…don't say something that lonesome~."

Takeru ground his jaw into Lapis' head.

"Please cease grinding your chin into my head immediately. It's unpleasant."

"Think of it as of communication. Uri uri. I'm happy to know a little more about you. Don't tell me things like you don't want me to knoow, uri uri uri."

Despite knowing Lapis rejected it, he continued to grind on her head further.

Lapis remained silent, but the atmosphere suggested she was in sullen mood. Takeru thought about his interaction with Lapis up until now.

Surely, he loved this little girl. For some reason he didn't want to leave her alone, or be hated by her no matter what. Not as a different being or a Magical Heritage, he loved her as another 『Human』.

Although Lapis said she considers herself as just a Magical Heritage, but Takeru thought it wasn't so. He thought so for a while already, but Lapis gave off a feel of a human.

With a wry smile, he placed a hand on top of her head.

"You see, to me, whether you are a Sacred Treasure or led this world to ruin, it doesn't matter really. Surely that's something someone as dumb as I am can't do anything about. Rather than that, you should tell me more about yourself."

"……"

"I've asked on the roof already, but what kind of person was Kusanagi Mikoto? You've been together for a long time right? I no longer mean it for Kiseki's sake, I want to know about it for myself. I want to use my senior who contracted with you earlier as a reference to get along with you well."

Lapis fell silent.

Even though she was always ready to give an immediate answer, she seemed to be lost.

Takeru continued to wait endlessly. I don't know what happened in the past, but surely, that human feel Lapis has was given by that person called Mikoto, he thought vaguely.

After a while, Lapis shook her hair lightly.

"I apologize for stopping in middle of conversation, but the emergency from earlier has occurred."

"Hm?"

"Nikaido Mari-sama has caused an accident."

Although she spoke indifferently, for just an instant she seemed to let out a "hmph", making him gasp in surprise.

"Accident?! An accident in the sky you mean?!"

"Yes. Since that person's flying is quite messy, she seemed to have caused an accident."

Lapis said while staring in the distance.

So that was the reason Lapis stopped him from getting on together with Mari. Knowing the reason for that now, Takeru tapped Lapis' shoulder.

"Is she all right? I mean, injuries… Kanaria was riding together with her right?"

"No need to worry. The flight catalysts are guaranteed 99% safety. Since shock absorbing instant charms were triggered at the moment of crash, they were unscathed."

Relieved, Takeru took a deep breath.

But, Lapis continued.

"However, the other party they have collided with seem to be a problem. I was able to identify them as West Side's student. Currently, it's on verge of developing into a conflict."

"…not good… hurry!"

A bit later, Takeru had to change his perception and thinking that living in the inner world would be good.

East Side and West Side.

Takeru still didn't know what was the difference between their forces.

They dived down from the sky, dropping their speed in between buildings they have prepared for landing.

Even from a long distance, they could see the commotion underneath. Because a lot of people have gathered hearing the commotion, they couldn't find a place to land that easily.

In the empty space in the centre of it stood Mari who folded her arms in front of her chest. Behind her they could see Ananda and Inia acting timid. Kanaria looked at it from a distance as if it didn't concern her at all.

Standing in front of Mari were four students wearing military uniforms different from ultramarine ones of East Side, they were boys wearing red uniforms.

When Lapis landed on the edge of the road, Takeru waded through the crowd heading to where Mari was. When they came to his view, he saw that the situation was explosive.

“Why are you East Side bastards here? This is West Side, it’s our area. Moreover, you got in the way of our training… you must be prepared for what’s coming right?”

“That’s why I apologized haven’t I? Neither of us was hurt, so let me off with an apology…! I told you that those girls have nothing to do with it!”

On the scene that has turned into a quarrel, West Side’s students held the staff and wand-type catalysts.

“No, whatever the form, I’ll have you take responsibility.”

“Of course. We’ll report you to higher-ups and forgive you. So shut up and listen.”

The student who seemed like a leader said something to his cronies stirring them up.

While Mari showed chagrin on her face, she still did her best to work it out peacefully for the sake of Ananda and Inia who stood frightened behind her.

“…fine. I’ll do what you say if you forgive us with that. But those two girls are unrelated. I’ll do whatever you want, so forgive me with that.”

As Mari quietly backed down, the boy with glasses placed a hand on his chin triumphantly.

“Very well… that short haired woman, I’ll overlook you.”

Glasses pointed at Inia, and told her to get lost.

“However, I won’t let off those two demihumans. Together with you they will become our slaves.”

“Haa?! What the heck!”

“Those beasts defiled the West Side just by stepping on it… they deserve death. Mixes aren’t allowed to oppose us, purebloods.”

When Glasses said that, his henchmen started laughing.

“First… oh right, how about you take off your clothes first. Show your filthy bodies for everyone to get a look on. If you satisfy everyone’s curiousity, someone might take you, you know? Well, I guess that’s impossible to happen here on the West Side though!”

“…!! These guys…!”

Mari lost herself in anger, and a rainbow-coloured magic aura was emitted from her body.

Then unexpectedly, Ananda grasped her shoulder.

With tears in her eyes, Ananda shook her head in Mari’s direction.

“Mari, you can’t use magic…”

“Why…?! I can send those guys flying with ease!”

“If you use attack magic in the middle of city, it will turn into a problem of entire East Side… demihumans still aren’t accepted here… I don’t want my companions to suffer any more than you already have.”

“…even so…!”

“Please… you don’t have to do anything, I’ll be fine.”

While enduring her tears, Ananda held the front of the jacket strongly, and took it off. Then, following Ananda, Inia also started to take off her jacket.

“I’ll join you. Speaking of the cause, it’s because the two of us made fun of Mari. Get back Mari.”

“…that’s…!”

“People around here are mostly from West Side. Because it’s a boundary between east and west, everyone will assault you if you attack. This is where we have to bear with it.”

Unconvinced, Mari downcast her face biting her lower lip.

“Don’t make that face. Taking clothes off is nothing. Look, I’m quite confident in myself?”

Although Inia laughed to reassure her, Mari didn’t miss the fact that her hand trembled.

The West Side’s students were still laughing.

“By the way, you are to take off your underwear too! Let everyone look at your miserable figure without anything getting in the way!”

As Glasses said that, giggles and laughter came from the surroundings.

Mari faced down in chagrin, and gripped her fist.

So whether outside or inside… there’s no difference whatsoever…!

For Mari who was trying to prove that people can be saved thanks to magic’s usage, and fought against persecution of witches, this was a cruel and absurd reality.

Even among human beings that hold magic, there was discrimination. What was different from outside, was only the fact that inside had an illusion of peace. The dark part of Magic Academy was right in front of her eyes.

Her first friends outside of the platoon were about to undergo a humiliation, and because she tried to protect herself she couldn’t do anything for them.

Frustrated by the current situation, Mari clenched her teeth soundly…

“Yo, I’m late.”

Someone grabbed her shoulder.

When she turned back, she saw Takeru standing there with a bright expression. Relief surged inside of Mari.

She finally stopped trying to bear her tears, and started crying soundly.

Really, I wonder why does this man always appears with such a gentle expression

whenever they are in a pinch.

Mari buried her face in Takeru's chest while crying.

"Takeruu~~! Fuee~~~!"

"Hey hey, don't cr——hey, your nose is running!"

When he pointed out that she made his clothes sticky, Mari kicked his shin with abandon.

"OUUuchhh!"

"You…! Show some resourcefulness and gently hold me idiot you idiot~! And don't make any comments about a maiden's running nose dirtying clothes idiot~! Also, you're late, idiot~!"

"~~~, it took me a while to procure a weapon. Also, Ananda and Inia, you don't have to do that any more. I'll do something about this."

"You'll do something, like what…? Eh, Takeru… your jacket?"

For some reason, Takeru wasn't wearing the Magic Academy school's jacket.

"It's fine, stand back. It's dangerous."

As Mari was about to ask, Takeru put a finger on her lips.

"…now then."

Takeru dragged an iron pipe he found somewhere, and stood in front of West Side students to protect everyone.

The bright and gentle man from before was nowhere to be found.

Instead, there was a man who contained his anger within.

"Kusanagi Double-Edged style initiate, Kusanagi Takeru. You guys, are you prepared? Since you have pulled out your wands, it means I can pull out my own weapon here."

Takeru spoke while hitting his shoulder lightly with an iron pipe.

"…who the hell are you. What's your affiliation."

"I just told you. I'm Kusanagi Takeru. As for affiliation, I'm not entirely sure."

"I asked whether you are from east or west."

"Sorry, but it's been only a month since I came here. I'm not from east nor west, also, I'm not from north or south either."

Although the West Side's leader tried to verify Takeru's affiliation, Takeru wasn't wearing a jacket. Magic Academy uniforms other than jackets are unified, so he was unable to determine it judging by his shirt and trousers.

"Hmph… swinging that barbaric thing, you must be one of those east bunch. You know what? If you try attacking us with magic, entire East Side's position will suffer."

"Magic, right? Unfortunately, I find it hard to use magic and can't do it… that's why, I'm going to do with this guy."

Takeru tapped his shoulder with iron pipe.

Glasses' eyes narrowed sharply.

"…bastard, an empty…!"

Hearing a word he didn't understand, Takeru blinked a few times. Lapis who stood next to him pulled his clothes. When he bent his waist, she whispered into his ear.

"Empty, meaning there's nothing inside. It's another term describing people without magical power."

"Ohh~, I see… as expected of my partner, so knowledgeable."

"Currently, I cannot be used by you, so calling me your partner is inappropriate."

"…so you're still angry, Lapis-san."

"So, what will you do. It would be difficult to get through this situations with just your flesh and blood. I would recommend running away."

"You won't know until I try, you too should get back."

Takeru once again faced off against the enemy.

The guys from the west have already prepared themselves for battle, and directed their wands at Takeru.

"There's no place in this Academy for empties! There is no way we can allow garbage like you to breathe in this place as West Side!——Kill him! I'll take responsibility for that!"

Glasses instructed the three cronies as blood vessels appeared on his red face.

With a disciplined movements, the cronies' released a shine from their wands towards Takeru.

" " "——《Bullet》 ! " " "

A number of light bullets was released.

Magic-Sweeping Sword

Takeru instantly expanded Soumatou and followed the fired light bullets with his eyes.

——*Slow, I can do this!*

Their speed was inferior compared to normal bullets, and Takeru avoided them easily by twisting his body.

Immediately after he avoided it, the light bullets hit the building's wall and burst out like a shotgun fire.

! Power's quite high——!

Takeru turned more cautious. Unfortunately, the pipe he held wasn't made of anti-magic material, and had no resistance to magic. After blocking two, three times it turned useless.

He needed to end it quickly.

"He avoided that?!"

"Those movements… avoidance magic?!"

“What an annoyance…!”

Takeru laughed fearlessly towards the three who lost their calm.

“It’s not magic——but swordsmanship!”

He lowered his waist and kicked off the ground.

Once again triggering Soumatou Magic-Sweeping Sword he approached, and momentarily moved behind the three. They stood dumbfounded with wands in their hands, unable to perceive Takeru’s movements. He lightly hit the first one’s on the back of his head, mercilessly broke the pipe on the second one’s right arm, and sent off the third one with a strong blow to waist.

Then, Takeru released Soumatou Magic-Sweeping Sword and gliding on the ground he killed off his speed.

At the same time as his speed returned to normal, three cronies fell down to the ground.

The glasses bastard didn’t understand what happened, and could only look at the cronies’ backs as the fell down.

Takeru changed his target to glasses, and poised his pipe horizontally.

His eyes glowing in red, made him look like a demon.

“What’s up, Glasses asshole… what are you scared about. The one who provoked first was you. How about you use all your strength to protect the honour of your friends here.”

“No way… impossible…! In just an instant…!”

“You, you’re a pure-blooded sorcerer right. In that case come at me in accordance what that noble blood dictates you. As your equal, I’ll show you how mediocre you are.”

Overpowered by Takeru’s fighting spirit, Glasses stood back and raised a short scream.

“Y-y-you guys! What are you just looking! You’re also from West Side right?! Don’t just look and help me out!”

The Glasses bastard asked the onlookers for help. Majority of the onlookers were students of West Side. One after another, they protruded their wands in Takeru’s direction.

…*this number, not good.*

He could no longer go easy on them. Muscles in his body groaned after the movement from before. It was easier to avoid than gun bullets, so he kept Soumatou‘s Magic-Sweeping Sword’s acceleration to minimum, but there were too many of them this time.

There’s no time to be lost here. I need to take down as many of them as possible.

“UUOooohh!!”

Raising a cry, he pounced at the West Side’s group.

It turned into close combat. Five, six, dozen people. Inside of a flurry of bullets Takeru continued to take down enemies with Soumatou Magic-Sweeping Sword’s activated.

However,

“——Khhh!!”

The moment he tried to take down the eleventh one, pain has struck muscles in his right

leg.

“?! He stopped! Kill him!”

The eleventh aimed his staff at Takeru, and started to gather magic power. He aimed for Takeru’s head. If it hits, he will definitely die.

Takeru forced his unsteady body and tried to lower himself somehow to avoid.

“Gahh——?!”

Suddenly, the eleventh’s body swayed and he fell on the ground.

It wasn’t something Takeru did. When he raised his face to see what was that, there,

“…hmph.”

Stood Kanaria holding a sword without a cutting edge.

Although she’s been only watching with a disgruntled look the entire time, it seems like she came to assist him.

Not dropping his guard, Takeru stood back-to-back with Kanaria.

“That’s why I told you not to fly. It’s your fault for not stopping. You reap what you sow.”

“You are right… but, is that fine? You are East Side’s student as well right?”

“Wood elves can’t use magic. No problem.”

“Is that so——then, let’s hurry up and finish this.”

“Don’t hold me back, Takeru.”

“That’s a new one, junior pupil!”

“Don’t act like a senior pupil!”

The two faced the looming enemies at the same time.

Even if one storm can’t take everyone down, two storms can defeat the enemies no matter how many there are. First move gives a win, defeat them before you’re shot. Since they were using catalysts, it was clear that most of them relied on wands and staffs for operative procedures. So the two prioritized their catalysts.

He dived between magical bullets, and hit the opponent who used a staff in his torso. Although he accelerated quite a bit, he didn’t mind breaking a bone or two.

Unlike guns, magic had to charge for a moment making the two of them enough to deal with it.

Just because the two of them were Double-Edged style users, they unconsciously cooperated with each other. Unexpectedly, their compability was perfect. From timing to breathing, the two’s movements were perfectly matched.

In about thirty minutes, Takeru and Kanaria defeated almost all of forty sorcerers that were there.

Two demons stood on the main street full of moaning West Side students

“…that was a great help, Kanaria.”

“Hmph.”

When Takeru dropped the iron pipe and exhaled, Kanaria folded her arms and faced sideways.

As expected of a sturdy wood elf, she was hardly exhausted and it seemed like there was almost no burden on her body. On the other hand, Takeru’s body was on verge of overheating.

Once again he realized benefits of having Lapis. If not for the Witch Hunter form, Takeru wouldn’t have survived the battles he was in up until now.

Even though he was depressed about weakness of his flesh and blood, he stood with his back straight and placed a hand on Kanaria’s head.

Her shoulders twitched in surprise.

“You are really something. Like this I can’t act like a senior pupil here.”

As he praised her, Kanaria’s gaze wandered, but she did not brush off the hand that stroked her head. She blushed slightly, but remained standing as she was.

“…d-don’t pat me. It itches.”

“Oh, not seeing a punch coming. So you’ve gotten a bit more informal after fighting together huh.”

Although a punch came after he said that, Takeru predicted that and avoided it.

“Don’t get full of yourself baldy!”

“Sorry sorry, my bad! I was too full of myself!”

“Khh——!”

“What’s up with you, are you a beast or something? I said I’m sorry!”

With a wry smile, he dealt with Kanaria who approached him swinging her sword repeatedly.

When he was playing around with his junior disciple, a distorted voice has resounded.

“——Y-you bastards don’t move! Do you know what’s going to happen if you oppose us?!”

Takeru and Kanaria directed their line of sight at the completely forgotten Glasses-kun.

The moment Kanaria saw his appearance, she was amazed by the stupid development.

Glasses was holding Lapis hostage, and pressed a wand against her temple.

“If you move I’ll kill her…! If you don’t want you comrade to be killed then drop your weapons!”

Hearing lines of a small fry, Kanaria completely lost her motivation.

On the other hand, Takeru took a step forward and stared at Glasses expressionless.

Seeing Takeru different from usual, Lapis called out to him.

“I am a Magical Heritage. I won’t be destroyed by a sorcerer of this level.”

She said so to reassure him, but Glasses caught on to something and smiled.

“Ha-haha! I see, a Magical Heritage! My property exerts the most effect on inorganic things like you! A third-rate Magical Heritage can be easily destroyed with it!”

Although Lapis narrowed her eyes as she was called third-rate, she didn’t remove her line of sight from Takeru.

“It’s all right. Please retreat as you are. I can escape any time.”

“……”

“…did you hear me?”

No matter how Lapis called out to him, Takeru wouldn’t stop walking towards them.

“D-don’t come over here! B-bastard, you don’t care what happens to her?!”

Ignoring Glasses’ screams, Takeru stood in front of him and took a thrusting stance with the iron pipe in his hand.

Then readied himself accumulating power from his entire body.

“…h-hey, Takeru.”

Kanaria tried move closer to stop him, but after seeing Takeru’s stance, she immediately understood what was he trying to do. Takeru gathered strength to the limit and glared sharply at Glasses.

“Kusanagi Double-Edged style——Unicorn’s Destructive Lance!”

Releasing the power, he thrust towards Glasses.

The air let out a noise akin to explosion, and the end of iron pipe closed on Glasses. However, right in front of him Takeru’s thrust ran into something and was stopped.

A semi-transparent red wall stood in Takeru’s way. The iron pipe pierced through it partially and has stopped.

“Ha…hahaha! I have stretched out protective magic in advance! Fool, it’s magical power is so dense it won’t break no matter how many bullets hit it! It’s the result of my training for the war with Inquisition!”

Takeru pulled his body back again, and released another thrust.

A crack appeared on the magical wall, but it did not break.

For some reason, he could feel tremendous heat coming from the iron pipe he held. When he looked at the end of it, he could see that the pipe’s exposed area was glowing brightly. It was as if it was being melted by heat.

“My property is 『Heat Transfer』! No matter what kind of substance is it, my magic allows me to transfer heat to it! A simple protective magic can be granted the effect of 『Heat Transfer』! Now that you get it back off! Otherwise, I’ll dissolve this Magical Heritage!”

Deaf to Glasses' speech, Takeru continued to release thrusts time after time again.

The pipe was losing its form and dissolving into liquid, and has eventually become impossible to hold. However, Takeru——

"——HAAaaa!!"

This time released a strike against the wall without any weapon, with his bare hands.

"Wha… did he go crazy?!"

Magic-Sweeping Sword

With Soumatou activated and using maximum out of his muscles, Takeru released a punch.

Naturally, the wall's heat scorched his skin and his bones broke because of the impact and acceleration.

With that said though, that blow was comparable to a projectile fired from a gun.

Time after time, Takeru continued to hit the same spot at high speed.

"N-no way… such a thing…"

Places cracking have started to spread gradually throughout the wall.

After a tremendous amount of cracks has spread out, Takeru stopped moving in with his fist still touching the wall.

And while feeling the smell of his own burning flesh, he downcast his face.

"You were the first one to pick a fight… combat might be out of your speciality, but you'll have to pay the price of tasting my fist."

"…hiii!!"

"Along with that worthless pride of yours——"

Takeru pulled back his fist with all his strength, and a glanced at Glasses with eyes of a demon behind the long fringe.

And,

"——Blow away to the ends of the earth!"

His strongest attack didn't stop at breaking the protective wall, and hit the cheek of Glasses behind it.

A merciless straight right. It broke Glasses' jaw and cheekbone, and blew his body far away into the rear.

Glasses slid on the ground, crashed into a wall, and after having convulsion he stopped moving.

Takeru spat out a short breath. Judging from the feeling he got when he hit Glasses, his neck shouldn't have broken. It has without a doubt caused a severe concussion, but Glasses' life wasn't in danger.

After calming his breath, he gently put a hand on Lapis shoulder, who was standing in daze.

Lapis glanced at Takeru's hand on her shoulder.

His skin melted, and broken bones have pierced meat and protruded outside.

"…Lapis, are you injured?"

As he said that gently, Lapis turned to look at him.

Takeru made a genuinely relieved expression.

"Are you an idiot?"

"That's horrible…"

"I have told you that there is no need to worry. I can't be destroyed by a magic on the level of 『Heat Transfer』."

"…well, I wasn't really worried about that though."

"Then why. I am unable to comprehend, what would have happened if it wouldn't go well and you lost your arm? While I was unable to defeat him, he was unable to destroy me. We should have just waited until he gave up."

Although Lapis told him that she can't understand, Takeru just smiled wryly.

He answered her question while withstanding the pain in his arm.

"Simple, I couldn't. Whether it's you being hurt by such scum, or even touched by him."

Takeru pressed the back of his left hand against Lapis' cheek.

"You are my sword. No… only mine sword, right? I felt possessive and was upset."

"……that's… what do you…"

"It means that I love you. That's why, I won't let anyone dirty you."

The moment he said that, Lapis opened her eyes wide open, stunned.

I don't mean it in a weird way you know? Takeru added while laughing.

"Also, you too, would have come to help me if I were in a pinch right? I've been always protected by you. That's why, I sometimes want to be the one to protect you instead."

It looked Lapis' expression wouldn't change after all.

However, when Takeru touched her cheek he could feel something like a throbbing. She stared straight at him.

Although it seemed as if time has stopped for a moment, after her limps trembled for a moment her mouth opened.

"……is… that so."

This time, she didn't say she doesn't understand.

Takeru smiled contentedly. Finally the unpleasant feeling started to melt. Because she misunderstood that he discarded her, he should have told her that he loves her right from the beginning.

But it was fine if his clumsy straightforwardness worked.

Love, it seemed like it was a feeling Lapis was able to understand.

And while the two interacted together in a subtle manner,

“Umm, it’s not a good place to flirt in… come on, hurry up and notice me…!”

Mari stood in the back looking like a demon. Behind her, there were figured of Ananda and Inia.

“Oh, Mari. Are Ananda and Inia all right?”

“Ngh, I protected them so they are fine… rather than that, show me that!”

“Yeah… it hurts…! This is bad, what do I do if it doesn’t heal?”

“It’s almost bare bone ain’t it… really, are you an idiot? I’m not too good at recovery magic so I can only perform emergency treatment… Well, East Side’s aid room is really amazing, so they should be able to do cell regeneration. It will heal, probably.”

Takeru apologized while receiving first aid treatment from Mari. The surroundings had calmed down and everything worked out.

To make sure no one died, they anonymously contacted the aid room and arranged a first aid squad.

Probably, the West Side bunch won’t report this incident. They wouldn’t reveal that they were defeated by an empty, even if their mouths were torn open.

However, with this incident Takeru changed his recognition of Magic Academy’s peace.

The only peaceful place was the East Side, and an unrelenting discrimination was going rampant on the West Side. Seeing this place as safe was just an illusion.

After the first aid was finished Takeru rose up and looked back.

The streets of West Side, were quiet unlike the East Side. Although the scenery was old-fashioned and there were no waste on the streets, it was incredibly inorganic.

People who stood in the shade of the buildings looked at Takeru and others as if they were different.

They were unable to ignore the insults in their whispers, nothing could be done even if they pretended nothing was said.

It was different from the fear of witches in the outside world.

On the inner side of the world, contempt for human beings was running rampant.

“…let’s go back. It seems like it will turn bad if we linger here.”

Takeru and others left the area in a hurry.

With a fast pace they left the border between West and East Side.

“……”

Meanwhile, Lapis stared intently at Takeru’s back.

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Chapter 4 - First Host

Two days after the fight with West Side’s students.

It was about 2 o’clock past midnight.

As a matter of course, there was no students nor teachers remaining in Magic Academy.

In the cold air of Magic Academy, rang out the sounds of sword strikes.

Scattering sparks, two blades collided. Slash after slash has been exchanged at a rate impossible to follow with the naked eye. Two swordsmen, Takeru and Orochi crossed swords for the first time in a long while.

Both of them used real swords rather than wooden ones. During Double-Edged style practice neither bamboo nor wooden swords were used. Because in life real swords were used, they drilled accurate movements into themselves as they were not allowed to ever fail.

A practice in a situation where a single wrong step would result with either of them dying was scraping off their spirit. With that said, they were not allowed to hold back. If your opponent faltered even for a moment, one of the commandments said to cut them down mercilessly.

No matter the state and posture they had taken, they were to use all their strength to cut down their opponent.

That’s the essence of the Double-Edged style.

As their sword techniques met each other releasing sparks, Orochi smiled happily.

“You move pretty well for a convalescent don’t ya.”

“Thanks…for that…!!”

“However, that’s all the praise I have for you. Everything else is poor. Because of you using half-assed Soumatou on top of your moves being slow, you’re taxing your body too much.”

Magic-Sweeping Sword

He was unable to refute to Orochi’s sermon. Whereas Takeru’s body was covered with sweat and was screaming at him, Orochi’s breath wasn’t even out of order.

“When you went at it with the West Side bunch you didn’t move at all either.”

“?! You were watching…?!”

“Yah. There’s no way I can leave monitoring you to Diluted can I?”

“! Then you could have helped us, you’re a teacher aren’t you?!”

“Bullshit.You are the one who should reap the seeds you sowed. Well, I wanted to see how your skills have improved too.”

“…khh…!”

“Surely, since back then——ya haven’t grown at all. Your master was really surprised.”

Seeing a lack of response, “kishishi” Orochi laughed teasingly.

“Hey hey Takeru, who do you think are exchanging blows with? Your master it is. Why won’t you go at me with full force? Waiting for opportunity? Were you waiting for an opportunity?”

“Wrong… if I move any faster my body will——”

“Spoiled small fry. Like that you won’t defeat my great self, dumbass.”

As Orochi spoke in arrogant heavy voice, Takeru shuddered.

The blade Orochi was pressing against Takeru’s disappeared, carried by momentum Takeru plunged forward.

Orochi was nowhere to be seen, however before Takeru could realize that fact——

“——Opportunity came. Full force.”

Below. Beneath Takeru’s bosom Orochi sheathed his sword and took a drawing stance.

Shit——!

Even before he could think of it, Takeru’s consciousness completely concentrated on defence.

“Kusanagi Double-Edged style——Ghost Light Firefly.”

Immediately after that, Takeru saw a flash. The sword-drawing technique was released from the opposite side of what the stance suggested.

The flash cut from the bottom until the top like a guillotine. If he took it on like that, he would have been cut in two from his crotch to his brain.

“——Damn!!”

Takeru raised the speed to the limit in an instant, he put a hand on the sheath on his left hip, and received the blow when it was near his feet.

However, Orochi’s blow was a flash. Even though it was received by the sheath, Takeru’s body was blown backwards grandly.

The opportunity created after that drawing technique was large. The distinctive blow has come as the sword was withdrawn from the sheath, and the blade jumped. Therefore, if he blocks the attack he’ll be safe——no such thing.

Ghost Light Firefly wasn’t the name of that single attack. It was the prototype of True Light style’s Shark Blade. This technique never defied the flow, riding the flow it’s characteristic was a release of continuous attacks.

Orochi’s figure was already beside Takeru who was blown into the air. Rather than pressing down the sword which has jumped out forward with strong momentum, Orochi jumped riding on it.

Pivoting, Orochi changed the trajectory of the blade that was soaring up, and swung it further down as momentum carried it downwards. Takeru hurriedly defended.

“Guahh!”

His body was thrown to the ground. Although it could be said that he received it well, the bones in his legs creaked as he was unable to kill the impact. He had no time to even raise a groan, as Orochi landed right in front of him.

Riding on the momentum Orochi sprang out from the legs he just placed, flew like a swallow barely grazing the surface and swung his blade up while increasing his speed.

Whether the attack misses, or it’s blocked, Ghost Light Firefly flew with all its momentum, recoil, and rode on the impact instead of defying it. Ghost Light Firefly is a technique that never stops to flow and allows to continuously release attacks.

Utilizing the power flow of the enemy, it allowed the user to achieve even greater speed. Not stopping the power, it left the user’s body to the flow, rotating one time after another looming like a razor storm.

A metallic sound echoed through the courtyard.

The light left behind by the slashes trajectory looked like fireflies flying through the night at high speed.

The number of scratches on Takeru’s body was increasing more and more, and before long he was covered in blood.

“For a while know it’s only ding ding ding ding, is your swordsmanship for kids swordfights?”

“Khh!!”

“What’s wrong, if you need to avoid then use the impact to avoid. I’ll be increasing speed again.”

“Gaa…!!”

Magic-Sweeping Sword Magic-Sweeping Sword

“You’ve been moving only on Soumatou for movements. Soumatou isn’t something that super convenient. You’re stupidly forceful, what will you do if you destroy your body.”

Orochi’s attacks had tremendous speed, and their power was also considerable.

Takeru hadn’t received any fatal wound because he was able to shift the blade’s trajectory slightly, but at this rate Takeru will be defeated even before reaching his limit.

“Ride on the flow, Takeru.”

“……!!”

“Your movements are too inefficient. It’s obvious that your body will get worn out. Don’t avoid, don’t withdraw, don’t exchange blows. Use your opponent’s strength against him. Ride the flow, manipulate the flow. That is all you need.”

“……!”

“Until now you’ve been living carried by the flow. It’s your speciality right?”

Provoked by Orochi, Takeru released the power in his body.

Although his body was attacked by heaviness, his head has regained composure instead

and his brain circuits have firmly connected.

Don't avoid, don't withdraw, don't exchange blows! Receive it——

The slash Orochi has released met with his own blade.

——Flow! And——

A simple concept. Parrying. So far, it's the very basic of all basics. However, ahead was something he experienced for the first time.

——Ride on the flow!

Takeru rode on the aftermath of parrying Orochi's slash.

Momentarily, his body did an automatic, vigorous rotation. He adjusted it with his foot without killing the momentum, and turned it into a blow of his own.

In front of him was Orochi. And in the exact same moment.

"Good."

The two swords overlapped again, and once again parried each other. Both of them used the recoil to further increase their speed.

"Don't leave Soumatou (Magic-Sweeping Sword) active like that. That thing isn't necessary to read your own and enemy's flow."

"…yess."

"Use it only for the starting point of your moves. As long as you have instantaneous force as origin, after that you can use the flow to move your body. Like that, both burden on your brain and your body will decrease."

"Yess…!"

The two swinging their swords looked as if they were dancing.

Ghost Light Firefly is a type of technique that applies sword dance into combat. The human maximum power output is limited, an attack from a demon or a different fantastic organism would easily overpower a human.

That's why Double-Edged style has developed a technique utilizing the enemy's strength.

The shrill tone of slashes meeting has gradually changed into something beautiful, like the sound of a bell.

Even with Soumatou's (Magic-Sweeping Sword's) minimal output, I can move this fast…!

He only invoked Soumatou's (Magic-Sweeping Sword's) for a little, only at the starting point of his moves, and rode on the flow.

Takeru's speed was going up easily. It was too fast which made him anxious, or rather, he was having fun. It has been really long time since he enjoyed swordsmanship like this.

And, the moment sword dance has reached its maximum speed.

The sound of sword strikes ceased to rang out.

Takeru and Orochi stopped their blade's at their opponent's neck.

A draw… no.

“…gu-gehoh.”

The one to vomit blood was Takeru. Rather than with a sword, Orochi pierced him with the sheath he held in left hand.

Unable to stand it, Takeru fell on his knees. Even if it was attack with a sheath, it still pierced his internal organs.

This kind of strength despite being blind. It was on a level where Takeru started doubting if Orochi is really blind.

Orochi said once, that him being blind doesn’t mean him being unable to see. It was possible to sharpen his hearing, and be able to sense the reflection of sound and flow of wind. He was able to sense the target’s movement and position, and he was even able to read their expressions. He was powerful enough to be called a monster.

“Your flow is stupidly honest. Although it’s good to ride on the flow, try not to leave any gaps in defence. If you can’t sense the change in my flow, you’ll be struck off guard.”

While Orochi checked if his sword settled well in sheath, Takeru bowed his head deeply.

“…thank you…very much.”

Takeru was the one who volunteered for practice. For a while already, he felt that he reached the limit in improving his swordsmanship by himself, and sought out his Master for practice.

After being passed this technique in super short amount of time, Takeru thought that if he remained beside Orochi, he would be able to grow further.

However, there was one problem to deal with first. Orochi still hasn’t instilled the entirety of Double-edged style in Takeru. He was not ready to be granted the skills, he learned this just a moment earlier.

“It’s still early to learn techniques, but it’s your lack of growth that’s at fault… learn some diligence.”

Orochi fixed his kimono.

“Go ask Mother to take a look at you. If you want to do this again, come here at the same time.”

“…um, Master.”

“Nn.”

Without looking back, Orochi faced slightly to the side.

Wavering, Takeru asked him if he knows the truth.

“You know about Kusanagi Mikoto, right?”

“……”

“Please tell me… I have already guessed that you aren’t human five years ago. Your name was on the family tree in our house, but you were among our ancestors 150 years ago

prior.”

Orochi stood quietly, unmoving.

“What happened during the war… and what was Kusanagi Mikoto, is what I want to know.”

Takeru once again lowered his head, pleading Orochi.

Orochi looked up at the night sky looking at the moon he couldn’t see, and spoke with a parched voice.

“You heard from Mistilteinn.”

“…yes.”

“I see. I knew that this subject will come up one day. I don’t really mind.”

“……”

“——Mikoto was my elder sister. I killed her in the Witch Hunt War.”

Takeru was unable say anything.

He was unable to ask ‘why’.

Because he tried to do the same thing once.

“Sis… Mikoto had a younger twin sister. Although they were monozygotic, most of the『Hyakki Yakou』‘s curse has been poured into the younger sister. Thanks to that Mikoto was spared from being disposed of, and grew up in the confinement box.”

“……”

“I spoke with her only once. I located the box in the forest by a coincidence, and had a short chat with her. Since then, I didn’t know what happened to her for another ten years. There was a war happening after all.”

With his usual aloof attitude, indifferently, Orochi spoke of the past.

Orochi seemed peculiar even among Kusanagi’s, he had a wilder temperament than Takeru.

He was a naive person who acted according to what he thought was right.

After mastering Double-Edged style, he left his little brother at home and joined the army on the witches’ side.

“At that time I did lots of stupid things. I have embedded experimental stage vampire cells in myself, I stopped aging and my body has become many times stronger than that of a human. I’ve been entrusted with a Twilight Type too, and conceitedly thought that what I do will affect the result of war.”

“…then, Master was…”

“I was the contractor of the other Twilight Type, Lævateinn. And Mikoto was Mistilteinn’s contractor. After I left Kusanagi house, it fell victim to war and was burned down. And among that turmoil, Inquisition took away Mikoto. After that, I guess you can imagine what happened.”

Probably wanting to spare him details, Orochi didn’t say any more than that.

But even without it being said, Takeru knew. He too, had a beloved little sister called Kiseki.

“Mikoto’s body was tampered with severely, given Mistilteinn as a weapon, and appeared in front of me like that.”

“……”

“And Mikoto was no longer herself. God Hunting form’s negative effects… her soul was eroded by Mistilteinn, and she went out of control.”

“……”

“…I killed her. The latter outcome, was just as history states. Two Twilight Types clashing caused the Akashic Hazard, and ended every~thin’.”

Orochi was seriously injured in the fight against Mikoto, he must have lost his sight back then.

He didn’t say anything about what he felt during that fight. And when he finished talking, he started to walk once again.

“Wait a moment…!”

“……”

“What I don’t know yet, is why Master won’t take Mistilteinn from me, instead you leave me to my fate? You could kill me and destroy Lapis, and everything would settle down nicely right…?”

It didn’t seem like he had a speck of intention to kill Takeru, but if that was true, that’s how it should have been.

“I don’t really mind doing that but——you… you want to save everything right?”

Suddenly, Orochi spoke with a sharp tone of voice.

“I can roughly tell what was your reason for discarding your sword in front of Kiseki. You were unable to discard anything, so you discarded the sword. Your little sister, your comrades, even yourself, you wanted to save every little thing. You turned selfish, and threw a tantrum like a brat. Despite being unable to do anything, you clung to the ideal.”

With his large back turned towards Takeru, Orochi gave him an advice.

“Takeru. Saving everything is not an easy task. Because I was unable to do it, I threw away many things. It was the same with Mikoto. Comrades, family, friends… even now, I don’t regret that.”

Heavily, his voice stabbed in Takeru’s chest.

“You don’t want to turn out like that right? Then you need to become strong. You need to become strong to an unbelievable extent. As you are now, you can’t save anything.”

“……”

“I’m different from Mother. I won’t stop you from fighting. I don’t like killing when

there’s no worth in it, I kill when there’s worth in it, so it’s more benefit in letting you go. Also, since you have made the choice to save everything, I don’t think it will no longer go as others want it to.”

Takeru didn’t say anything, he could only listen.

“Grasp the sword again, Takeru. Get Mistilteinn under control and become strong. And don’t hesitate even if the world is to be destroyed.”

“……”

“Saving everything, is the only path left to you.”

Cutting short there, Orochi left the place along a loud sound of his sandals. Takeru tried to chase after him, but his body didn’t respond to him and he once again fell on his knees.

In the end, Kusanagi Mikoto’s case didn’t lead to saving Kiseki. Because their situations were completely different, it wasn’t so whatsoever. Takeru looked up at the moon on the night sky and closed his eyes in silence.

“…I know that.”

He had enough of living a life of being used, decided to save everything… and came this far

And yet, he didn’t have any results. Even now, he continued to live out his days in peace.

He didn’t find a way to save Kiseki, nor a way to return to his comrades.

He knew. What was he lacking. And how much of it was needed.

He was overwhelmingly short on strength.

Takeru needed to become strong in every aspect.

The only comrade he could rely on was Mari. They had to confront the status quo just the two of them.

They are done getting a grasp on the situation. All that’s left was action.

First he has to reconcile with Lapis, and become true partners with her. Next, he has to elicit a way to save Kiseki from Orochi, and——

“…return to our comrades.”

Opening his eyes he reached out to the moon seen on the starry sky.

Takeru decided to return to AntiMagic Academy after all.

He was already standing on the startling line.

All that was left was to run.

Takeru overlapped his palm with the moon, and clenched it strongly.

Four o’clock at midnight, Takeru who fell asleep after coming back from practice faintly opened his eyes in the bedroom.

It was because he felt something like a pressure on his body.

At first he thought it was sleep paralysis. It wasn't uncommon for him to have muscle stiffness.

However, he was horrified by the figure reflected in his blurry sight.

Before he could turn wary, he was able to discern who is it by that figure's colour.

"…Lapis?"

While her azure-coloured hair swayed, Lapis rode on top of Takeru's body.

Moreover, she was naked.

"……"

She was naked.

"…hae? …hae?!"

When Takeru tried to raise his upper body, he was pushed back down with both of Lapis' hands.

Surprised, Takeru looked up at Lapis' body.

Although immature, seeing her body Takeru understood she was a woman and blushed. She didn't breathe at all and was cold like a sword. However, her softness gave him supreme bliss, and the parts that touched her immediately heated up. The moonlight with an unique tint entering through the window illuminated Lapis.

He couldn't find any other words other than 'beautiful'.

"Yo… why——"

"Be silent. Right now, I will respond to your request."

"I-I d-didn't remember making such a request though?!"

"In this form my link with you is too weak."

Telling me something with a deep meaning, Lapis moved her face in front of Takeru's.

"What a…"

The moment he tried to stop her, Takeru's and Lapis' lips overlapped.

Unable to let out any voice, he remained as he was.

Lapis entangled her fingers with Takeru's, and sank in slowly pinning him down on the bed. In his mouth, he could feel their tongues intertwine.

NONONONononono this is bad right!

In contrast to his expectations, Lapis' tongue was hot and it gently stroked inside of his mouth.

He intended to resist, but for some reason he felt strength leaving his body. Even if he resisted inside of his head, body didn't listen to him. Gradually his consciousness grew dim. As if they were melting together, senses of his body and mind have turned ambiguous.

Takeru experienced it before. He had this feeling during the re-contract with Lapis.

With a static sound as if power was cut from a TV, Takeru's consciousness flew to a different location.

His consciousness and memories turned into a swirling mass.

A number of voices screaming and blaming have intersected in his head like a tornado.

Inside of the enormous vortex, immediately after seeing the vision of world collapsing, he stood in an enclosed white space. Although he tried to let out a voice, he wasn't even able to breathe.

When he ran his line of sight from one end of the white space to other, in a single point he discovered something red.

It was a woman pinned down. The woman's body was penetrated by something which seemed like needles.

The surrounding area was filled with something that seemed like wriggling meat.

Her appearance overlapped with Kiseki's.

Momentarily, Takeru realized who was she.

Kusanagi Mikoto. Orochi's older sister, Mistilteinn's first contractor.

This was surely, Lapis' memory of the past.

『"The treatment is complete. Halt of unconfirmed ancient property verified. Releasing restraints."』

Along with a buzzer, a sound had come out from speakers and the shackles Mikoto was held with were released.

Mikoto's body fell to the ground. At the same time, the lumps of flesh around her collapsed and turned into ashes. She was unable to move for a while, but then she started crawling and reaching out for something.

It was a small branch of azure colour.

Mikoto grasped the branch, and held it dearly to her bloodied chest. Her hair swayed, and Takeru saw Mikoto's face for the first time.

No…way…

Her face and Lapis' were like two peas in a pod. Mikoto who had the same face as Lapis narrowed her teary eyes kindly, and spoke to the azure coloured branch.

『"Today… it wasn't all that painful."』

While stroking the branch, Mikoto went to the corner of the room and laid down.

And then, happily, joyfully, she continued to speak to the branch which didn't respond.

She looked like a child cradling a doll.

It was as if that branch was her only salvation.

His chest was attacked by a tightening feeling. Anger, sorrow, and emptiness filled his

chest. As Takeru was salvation for Kiseki, for Mikoto, that branch was her only salvation.

Takeru's vision distorted, and time started to flow at great speed.

It was repetition of the same thing, Mikoto continued to speak to the azure-coloured branch on her own.

Today, let's talk about the first time I saw the outside world.

Today, let's talk about the morning glow.

Today's dinner, I wonder what it will be. I hope I can eat my fill

Today, let's talk about the boy who came to the box.

Mikoto continued to repeatedly tell stories about even the shortest happy moments. Eventually, the small branch she embraced started to tinge with a faint light. As if responding to her speech.

Pleased with just that much, Mikoto smiled broadly and laughed.

However, after many years had passed, Mikoto's heart was overtaken by fatigue.

Gradually her voice turned thin, she became unable to cry in pain, and no was longer able to speak of happy memories. Eventually, Mikoto started to entrust her wishes to the small branch.

The wish for the world to collapse. Her precious wish, wanting for the world to end. Tears ran down Takeru's cheeks.

He was unable to determine if it were really his own tears.

Takeru's vision was interrupted again, and he stood in a different location.

There, was a battlefield full of bullets and magic particles flying all over. Many soldiers and many witches were killing each other in this pandemonium.

In the middle of that hell, a new hell was dropped down.

Mikoto's figure emerged from inside of something which seemed like a coffin which crashed in the middle of battlefield.

She walked unsteadily through the battlefield, like a ghost.

While soldiers and witches watched it not knowing what's happening, Mikoto spoke to the branch she held in her hands.

『"Let's finish everything together… Lapis."』

In response to Mikoto's wish, the branch changed its shape into that of a distorted sword.

At the same time, her body was covered in particles of azure colour.

The power to devour everything and slay gods started fusing with Mikoto's soul.

However, a human's soul was unable to stand the erosion.

Mikoto let out a lament-like scream, suffering pain of the soul. At the same time, red meat overflowed from her body.

Kusanagi Mikoto turned into hell. Soldiers, witches, she swallowed them all.

As outrageous slaughter continued, the screams soon changed into sounds of sword slashes.

Looming in front of Mikoto's eyes, was Orochi wearing a fiery red armour.

Orochi locked swords with Mikoto who had turned into a monster.

He desperately called out to her, trying to relay that he was the boy from back then to Mikoto. But his voice didn't reach her.

Her mind was no longer there.

『"Damn ittt…!! There's no excuse… this… such a thinggg——AAAAaAaaaaAaa!!! DAMMMIIITTTTTTTTTT!!"』

Orochi wailed, his face wet with tears.

The armour covered his head with flames, completing his existence as someone who hunts gods.

Two god hunters clashed.

Orochi's wail turned into the wail of the humanity, and eventually, turned into the wailing of the world.

Everything was scorched, everything died.

『Void』 magic covered the world and indiscriminately devoured people.

The two's fight continued several days, and when it came to an end, the majority of the human race was already killed.

An azure-coloured sword dropped down beside the fallen Mikoto.

Although the sword fell in a way that made it seem as if it snuggled up to dead Mikoto, when he thought it started vibrating faintly, it turned into particles. Azure-coloured particles gathered together, and formed a human shape.

Before long, that human form turned into an azure-coloured girl and placed a hand on Mikoto's dead body.

『"Host, please wake up."』

『"_____"』

『"I have granted your wish. The world was destroyed. There is no one left to hurt you."』

『"_____"』

『"Host…please wake up. It should no longer hurt. We can eat delicious dinner now."』

The girl expressionlessly shook Mikoto with her hand.

There was no reply from Mikoto. Decayed up to the ends of despair, most of her body was carbonized. Still, the girl didn't cease to speak to Mikoto. Just like Mikoto used to speak to the girl beforehand, not receiving any reply.

There was no sorrow in it. There were no tears in it. It was as if it was natural thing to do, surely, that's what the girl thought.

『"Yo…u…."』

Worn out Orochi has appeared in front of Mikoto's body and the girl. Both of his eyes were crushed, he was in a state where meat was falling off his body, he held a broken sword and wobbled a he moved.

The crushed eyeball was forcefully made function with magic, and Orochi saw the girl.

『"The…fuck….why are you… why are you snuggling close to her with that face…! Why are you alive while Mikoto died…?!"』

As Orochi poised the broken sword, the girl turned around.

Orochi took form of rage, suffering and sadness, brandishing the sword.

"That face——don't look at me with that faceeeeeeeEEEEEEEEEEEE!!"

As he swung down the blade, the girl——

——Lapis, continued to stare with her glass-like pupils.

『"…! Da…mn… dammi…t…!!"』

The edge stopped moving before it reached Lapis.

Orochi fell down on his knees and wailed in the extinct world.

Lapis didn't know why was he crying, she just single mindedly,

『"…Host?"』

Continued to shake Mikoto's body intently.

"Nh————?!"

Feeling shock as if his heart suddenly started to beat again, Takeru opened his eyes.

Lapis moved her lips away pulling a thread of saliva, and Takeru spat out a deep breath.

"…just now."

"I have responded to your request. I want to know more about you, is what you said. Just now it were my memories from the beginning of my personality formation and the God Hunting precedent."

Lapis described indifferently.

Takeru wiped the tears that wet his cheek, and looked at Lapis.

She was totally expressionless.

"God Hunting form required a strong soul. Contractor's soul is essential to the fusion process. However, a human soul is unable to bear it anyhow."

"……"

"While Kusanagi Mikoto's body was that of a demon, her soul was that of a human."

“…didn’t you know that her soul is human?”

“On top of it being the first fusion without precedent, I did not know what would be the result. However, she wished for it. Whether I knew that or not, I would have activated it. After all, the meaning of my existence is to fuse with the contractor.”

Lapis’ voice was cold and stinging.

“If human cannot endure it… then does that mean I was in deep too?”

“You do not have to worry.”

She breathed out, and spoke with her eyes closed.

“After all, your soul is not that of a human.”

“……”

“Women of Kusanagi family have bodies of a demon and soul of a human. Conversely, men have bodies of a human and soul of a demon. Have you not heard about it from your kinsmen?”

As Takeru went silent, “Am I wrong?” Lapis asked.

He never heard of that from his parents nor Orochi.

However, he was not surprised.

“For a long time, I vaguely thought that’s how it is. ‘Isn’t the reason my body feels narrow because my soul is too large’… although, I don’t know much about souls and such.”

“……”

“I see, so my soul is not human…”

He murmured and looked up at the ceiling. Strangely, he didn’t receive any shock. Being unable to understand human hearts and going on rampages without regard to where he was were stories of the past. He involved himself with many people and formed bonds. He was trusted by people, and became able to trust others.

Honestly, it didn’t matter to Takeru that his soul was that of a demon.

He had no interest in the quality of a soul. He has no memories of suffering because of such a thing.

Until now, he’s been looking as Kiseki continuously suffered from the demon body. Takeru wasn’t that weak to be shocked by something of this degree. In the first place, if he bothers himself with such a silly thing, he will be beaten up by Ouka.

‘You are a human called Kusanagi Takeru’ is what she told him, she really would beat him up.

“By the way, what will happen to me after we’re completely fused?”

“The boundary between us will be lost. We will lose our selves, gain power to eradicate the threat of gods and become a presence that acts only in order to fulfil our own wishes.”

Takeru met her eyes with his and muttered “I wouldn’t like that”.

“So you don’t want that after all. Understood, as soon as our safety is assured, we’ll cancel the contract. If it’s wounds then do not worry, I’ll take care of it as consideration.”

“Wait wait, what I don’t like, is that I’m unable to grant myself my own wish.”

“Even if you say that I can’t comprehend that. After all, I’m just a weapon.”

With a cold stare Lapis turned towards Takeru.

But, Takeru dismissed that stare with just a single word.

“Liar.”

“Where did I lie. I require explanation.”

“Certainly, you might have been just a weapon when you were created, but you have a personality that was born in this world right?”

“So what?”

“In the end, that means you are no different from humans. You indeed are similar to me. My soul being a demon’s or whatever, because of the environment I grew up in I became human… isn’t that the same for you.”

Lapis tilted her head puzzled.

Somehow, she was unusually frustrated, or rather, there was a feeling that she was being defiant in front of something she couldn’t understand.

Takeru put an appalled expression on his face.

“Why is your appearance and tone of voice just like Mikoto’s?”

“…… Because there was no object for reference other than her.”

“Wrong. That’s not the reason.”

“It is not wrong. Fusion with Kusanagi Mikoto’s soul failed, it was eroded by me and exhausted. Only the information is left in my soul, and from that information my pseudo-personality was——”

He abruptly stood up and grabbed both of Lapis’ shoulders.

Lapis’ shoulders faintly trembled.

“Wrong——it’s because you loved that person. You loved her very much.”

While staring seriously in Lapis’ eyes, Takeru said that strongly.

Loved her. With these words, she froze stiff.

“…I cannot understand”

“No, you can. I have relived your memories.”

“……my God Hunter form with you was interrupted. Soul link should be weak.”

“I can tell even without such a thing. You wanted to save her because you loved her. You wanted to fuse with her, because you wanted to be together with her too. Her, who was suffering… and was always talking to you… you wanted to do something for her. The

method was incredibly clumsy and you have inconvenienced to everyone around you, still, you were doing it purely for that person.”

“You are wrong. I have killed her with God Hunter form.”

“Weren’t you the one who said that you didn’t know of her soul being human, were you. You had no intention of killing her, and just wanted to become one right?”

“I――”

“…enough. You are just like me. A clumsy stupid idiot.”

As if to interrupt Lapis who wanted to correct it, Takeru threw his arms around her.

Lapis didn’t resist, and allowed herself to be hugged by Takeru.

He slowly, gently stroked her azure-coloured hair.

“You… were sad when that person died.”

“……”

“Left alone, you were lonely.”

Lapis was in daze as the warm palm stroked her head.

She didn’t know the meaning of warmth. She didn’t know the meaning of sadness either.

Then she overlapped hands of Mikoto who always stroked her with Takeru’s hands.

“I decided, I’m going to stay beside you. I promise not to leave you and die on my own.”

“……”

“Thank you for trying to make my wish come true. I’m sorry for being indecisive.”

He embraced Lapis even stronger.

“But I want to grant my own wishes to myself. There is no need to become one. I want to stay myself, and for you to stay yourself. And I need you, Lapis.”

Lapis didn’t answer.

Confused by the warmth of having her hair stroked, she buried her face in Takeru’s chest.

“I don’t know about myself. And yet why, do you know so much about me?”

“I don’t know. I just thought that’s how it is.”

“I am unable to deny your analysis of me any more. No matter how much I try to deny it, my personality issues an error. I have been always at mercy of this pseudo-personality. There is too many things I do not understand about myself.”

“So you can learn little by little, right.”

“This personality… if I didn’t have emotions… I should have been just a sword that brings upon twilight.”

“I am happy from the bottom of my heart that you were born.”

“…I…what should I do?”

With a trembling voice, she asked as if seeking help from Takeru. He hugged Lapis' body strongly and answered.

"Stay with me. Be my partner."

Lapis took a faint breath.

"For this world, I am just something harmful. I might destroy this world."

"No such thing. I will use you correctly, and prove it to you."

"I might erode and exhaust you up. I might end up killing you."

"My soul is demon. If the fusion goes well we should be able to stay as we are."

"…there is no basis for that."

"Who needs such a thing."

Having her head stroked by Takeru, Lapis narrowed her eyes. And then, she asked the first question that seemed to hold emotions inside.

"Then, you will not reject me? Don't you think that using a sword of destruction like me is unpleasant?"

"Don't make me repeat myself, I have no intention of discarding you. I don't want to lose you. That's why——"

As Takeru and Lapis looked at each other intently, he put in all his feelings and said.

"——Once again, make me your host."

This voice certainly reached Lapis' heart.

Lapis gently closed her eyes and shed a single tear. It was small enough to overlook, but she certainly cried for the first time.

"……yes, gladly…Host."

Being called in a nostalgic way, Takeru smiled.

She's expressionless like always but right now I'm fine with that single word, Takeru thought.

And like this, a boy with the heart of a demon and a sword of twilight that snuggled up to humans and has become one have contracted once again.

The far west edge of West Side Magic Academy.

In the underground space that was the meeting place for the West Side's executives to gather, a meeting of Valhalla's 『Pureblood Party』 has been always performed on weekends.

Fantasy Cult's

『Pureblood Party』

The West Side indeed was holding true to the concept of pure blood, but those who

shouldered that philosophy on themselves, were ones who operated under the banner of purifying the world and called themselves as such.

With few exceptions, all personnel consisted of pure-blooded witches and sorcerers. The centre of underground space was adapted to look like a large auditorium with a stage in the centre.

On the centre of illuminated stage, was placed a single throne.

“Hmph, so in the end, Mother Goose has decided to draw in Mistilteinn?”

Sitting in the luxurious throne and sharpening her purplish-red nails was a bizarre woman wearing a dress decorated with roses.

Fantasy Cult’s

Her name was Elizabeth. She was one of Valhalla’s leaders along with Mother Goose, Haunted and Orochi. At the same time, she served as the chairman of Magic Academy European Shelter’s West Side .

Purplish-red heels, a purplish-red dress, purplish-red lips.

And purplish-red rose petals were floating around her, decorating her.

It was a woman flashy enough to be said she had horrible taste.

“Why are you remaining silent? Hurry up and answer, Kanaria.”

From inside the darkness where there was no light, Kanaria looked at her in annoyance.

Despite the deep darkness, Kanaria’s eyes let out a dull shine.

“…yes. Mother intends to take in Mistilteinn and Takeru.”

“Oh well!!”

With an exaggerated act suggesting she was appalled, Eliza threw away a rasp.

At the same time, rose petals flying around her fell to the ground.

“How deplorable… that’s why that inorganic woman can’t be trusted. Even though she should respect the opinion of elders and purebloods… she’s still being a burden.”

She shook her head, and making a rotation with her thin fingers that seemed like they would break, soundlessly an already-lit pipe appeared in her fingertips. Eliza put it in her mouth with a flowing motion, and sucked in the tobacco smoke deeply, and just as deeply spat it out.

“Do something about the disturbing element on your own, Kanaria.”

“…I have a duty on that side. If I move now, it will be suspicious.”

“Oooh, ohhh, ohhoo, Kanaria? My empty, magicless, dirty elfie? Right now it’s not time to worry about something so trivial is it? The war has already began.”

“……because of Kusanagi Kiseki, Alchemist joined Inquisition. The balance of power was compromised. And yet, you started the war on your own. You should confirm the circumstances further. Other shelters as well as West Side have been successfully stirred up.”

“That’s right! I started it! Instead of those stinky guys I was the one to *stirr it up*! In the first place why did the Senate select that inorganic woman to recover the 『Hyakki Yakou』? It resulted with this plight! The alliance between Inquisition and Alchemist has been set in stone!”

“…….ngh.”

“You are also guilty. I’m grateful so I don’t blame you for that? And what’s this? I wonder if you are trying to *change sides to East*? Were you won over by that plain woman and fake vampire, Kanariaaa?”

Kanaria and Eliza glared at each other.

As their lines of sight intersected, when the sparks were about to fly, a sound of door opening on the other side of darkness has rang out.

“——Yahoo! Heyaheya hello hello, it’s been a while the two of you!”

From the behind the door that leaked light inside, a figure moved closer to the two while making sound footsteps. Eliza and Kanaria frowned and clicked their tongues.

Even inside of Valhalla he was known a trickster who often got in the way.

Sorcerer of despair, necromancer Haunted.

The wounds inflicted on him when he was hit by Mari’s aurora have already healed, and he had a glossy expression on his face.

Haunted stopped moving right next to Kanaria.

“Oh, Kanaria-san?!! Ohh, you have become really pretty while I haven’t seen you. Last time I’ve seen you when you were still in the middle of rapid growth and still a small girl! What a sham——I’m just joking so don’t make such a face! I’m proud of the Allmighty! ‘Ripe for eating’ truly perfectly describes you!”

His hand that tried to touch Kanaria's hair with his hand while speaking a tongue twister at high speed was cut off by the sword Kanaria had on her back. The hand fell down on the floor with a splatter. Haunted's disconnected right arm started jumping about on the floor like a fish that was thrown into the land.

"How extreme. Is this the so called 'tsun'? I hope you will come to me with 'dere' one day."

While Haunted started wiggling his body eerily, the arm that was wriggling on the ground was swallowed by a black swamp that suddenly appeared.

The moment it disappeared, Haunted's right arm was already rejoined in its original position.

While grinning, this time he turned towards Eliza who sat on the throne.

"It's been a while to you too, Eliza-san! You're invariably flashy! I want to tell you to make yourself young in moderation, but it's rather that your cell freezing that's great! As expected of the 『Almighty』 Ancient Wizard, I want to say a heartfelt praises towards your rebellion against the flow of time! You haven't changed at all from the time when you were a young girl longing to become a vampire and have bathed in blood of young virgins a thousand years ago!"

make-up

Noisily he clapped and praised Eliza with a big smile on his face. The person in question snorted coldly.

"Even if that's ironic, isn't it too big an act? Ancient property holders like us discarded the concept of aging long time ago… I have already forgotten about the past."

"Nonoo, I think that essentially nothing has changed about you okay? How would you explain your unchanging appearance other than by your obsession with youth?"

"……"

"Your make-up, it's been disturbed?"

As Haunted provoked with a smile, Eliza's cheek twitched. Probably, inside of her the anger reached its peak. Her poker face didn't seem to be all that good.

Haunted spread out his arms like a stage actor and sadly looked up at the light.

"Why must women think that old age and ugliness is one and the same, how unfortunate it is. Old age is something that's a symbol. It's the sign of having a dense past. Do not deny age, grasp it, and while riding on your past feelings face forward in order to polish the future… and enjoy the old age… don't you think that women like that are beautiful?"

"I don't want to be told that by a necromancer who denies death."

"Ouch, that hurts if you tell it in such a way! You got me there!"

Cheerfully laughing, Haunted tried to continue talking about ridiculous topics.

"By the way, did you know? Majority of men are lolico——"

"Spare me this farce. Rather than that, why did you return here? Didn't the senate order you to be on standby in the field? I'll say this, from the standpoint of purebloods, we don't

want a nuisance like you anywhere near us. Is there a reason for you showing your face here I wonder?”

When Eliza said so dissatisfied with a hand on her chin, “Of course!” Haunted answered with confidence.

“In the past there were several emergency situations. Times where every minute counts, this is exactly such time.”

“…emergency? Hurry up and say it then.”

“In fact——someone whom I don’t want to stop loving me has come here, so I flew over!”

Without hesitation and embarrassment, Haunted put a hand on his flushed cheek.

On the skin of Eliza’s cheek cracks have appeared. Still, Haunted continued not minding that.

“Mari-san! Ohh Mari-san! I wonder how long was it since I was separated from her… four months? Or is it five months? For such a long time, I haven’t seen her figure desperately trying to act strong and hold back her tears…! Surely, she too must have been lonely…! That’s why I have made such a detour all this way to come and meet her! This is the power of love! Love that exceeds the sea of the Void property!!!! I need to respond to this love no matter what…! I will come ba——”

“——Drive this guy away from here. I’m not going to take part in this farce any longer.”

In front of Haunted who continued his crazy monologue, Eliza flicked her finger and complained. Then, two people clad in red robes appeared beside Haunted like ghosts, and started dragging him while restraining his arms.

“Please wait Mari-san! My Mari-chan! I’ll surely come and pick you uppppp~~~~!”

While making a disgusting declaration, Haunted faded away from the underground space. Eliza spat out a tired sigh.

“Kanaria, let’s get back to the topic.”

“…there’s no topic. If I don’t go back, it will be suspicious.”

“Don’t mess with me here. Haunted seems to like you so he tried to divert the story but… do you think I’ll really allow you to avoid answering?”

While lightly chewing on her purplish-red nails, Eliza smiled bitterly. As Kanaria only stared at Eliza who looked down at her from the sea, Eliza merrily stroked her beautiful lips.

“You, prove your loyalty to us.”

“…as I have shown until now. I have did tons of dirty work for you already.”

Fantasy Cult

“Those missions were something decided by consensus of entire Valhalla right? What I’m saying, that you are to prove your loyalty to the West Side. In other words, you are to rebel against that inorganic woman.”

Eliza hid her face behind a western fan, and made a smile that could be seen through her

eyes only.

“——Dispose of Kusanagi Takeru and recover Mistilteinn. By doing so, you will raise forces and will obtain the right to carry out your revenge on Inquisition and Alchemist.”

“?! What will you do if you have it. Senate will not allow it…”

“Just ・do ・it . Listen. All of the elites that have gathered here are saying to leave it to you. If war intensifies in the earnest, confusion will take control of battlefield. If that happens, you’ll be allowed to use these children as you please and fulfil your revenge.”

Eliza stood up from the throne striking the floor with a heel, and while swaying her hips she moved closer to Kanaria.

The western folding fan was moved close to Kanaria’s mouth.

“…the ones who killed your mama is Inquisition and Alchemist right. Don’t you want to lay waste to them? It’s impossible if you stay beside that inorganic woman and the fake vampire.”

“……”

“Do you know what I mean by saying that you need to choose?”

Eliza’s voice echoed inside the darkness.

Kanaria’s expression didn’t change in the slightest, but her fist was letting out a loud sound.

Outside of the meeting place, Haunted leaned with his back on the door and heard everything.

A drop of the swamp that was used to recover his arm earlier was left on the floor, and he heard the conversation through that.

“…why is Eliza-san such a snob despite having good appearance and charming moves.”

Genuinely regretful Haunted shook his head and left the place.

Tumbling under his feet were remains of the two pureblood party’s elites.

After passing the corpses, on the floor made with a material similar to a red carpet, there, he saw a lone black girl standing.

Dressed in black gothic clothes, it was a girl with incredibly horrible look in her eyes.

She had a surreal and beautiful features like a western doll. She had bluish-black hair like the night and iridescent black pupils reminiscent of black opal, anyone who saw her would say she’s an evildoer on just a glance. Haunted stood in front of the girl with a surprised expression on his face.

“That’s unusual. Since when do you have a human form?”

The girl clicked her tongue and crossed her arms in front of her chest.

“Since we entered this place obviously. While there’s a permit to carry Magical Heritages with their own will, the release of attack form is required. Although it’s humiliating to take a shape of a human, it’s better than being inside of a anti-magical sheath.”

When Haunted started walking once again, the black girl——S-class Magical Heritage 『Dáinsleif』 followed him, snuggling up closely.

“You heard it too haven’t you, the meeting’s conversation.”

“Yeah… Eliza is being impatient. Because her actions stand out, it’s obvious even to the West Side. Soon enough she will be taken down from the seat of Chairman… there’s a number of representative witches from other shelters who want to stop her. That’s why she wants to obtain godslaying power, and make herself the king.”

“She is very outstanding as a witch. Regretfully, she is too strong, or rather too selfish. Unlike Mother, she’s the type that’s disliked by the Senate.”

“…being told that by Haunted, I feel that she really is pitiful.”

“I’m not interested in things like positions or honour. Even more so, in the pureblood principles, it makes me want to barf. The world is interesting because there are many different people with many different ideas in it… what’s fun in a single-coloured world.”

He shook his head with a sigh, and looked sideways.

“Actually, you haven’t come here to do something as silly as eavesdropping on the meeting right?”

“!…that’s right. I’ve heard that during the 『Hyakki Yakou』‘s recovery failure a bonus was brought back, so I thought ‘can it be’… but sure enough, dammit. To think that azure-coloured would be here… unbelievable…!”

Nacht stomped with her feet many times while clicking her tongue.

“Good grief. Why does Eliza-san and Mother Goose do such unnecessary things. I can’t understand why would Kusanagi Takeru and Mistilteinn be brought here.”

“Haunted… let’s go there right now and kill them…! I can’t bear it any longer… the humiliation from that time continues to throb harder and harder…!!”

Hugging her body which trembled in anger, she bit her lips and tears pooled into her eyes.

Previously, in the raid on the mock battle tournament carried out in order to dispose of Mari, Haunted and Nacht were defeated by Takeru and Lapis.

The quality of her as a Magical Heritage was insulted, and along with her master, Haunted they were called dull. Even now Nacht thought bitterly of that time. For a sword, being called dull is an insult beyond any other words.

Haunted didn’t listen to angry Nacht, and squinted facing forward.

“Kill them right now…? What are you saying, Nacht.”

“……?”

“It’s not the time for that at all. The finest stage… best condition… among the greatest passion, that’s the only thing I’ll agree to.”

“…Haunted…?”

“That brat has to be my enemy no matter what. Mine, and only mine enemy. No matter

who benefits of it, he’s simply not allowed to be my ally.”

Noticing that the quality of his voice is different from usual, Nacht looked up at Haunted’s face.

And then took a breath in shock.

She has spent a mind-boggling amount of time together with Haunted. Supporting his struggles, she assisted him in bringing despair. There weren’t many Magical Heritages who focused on human aspect of their master when choosing. In the first place, the concept of good and evil didn’t exist in Magical Heritages. They chose their masters not bothered by such ridiculous criteria.

For example, they used their very existence. In other words, the colour of their soul.

Because Nacht loved Haunted’s black iridescent soul, she wasn’t interested in his misdeeds. By him swinging the sword and obtaining victory she felt supreme joy.

That’s why she snuggled up to him. She was the weapon who knew him better than anyone else.

And yet, it was the first time she saw that expression on Haunted.

Because she never seen Haunted reveal his anger in earnest. He was always aloof, and even if he spoke feverishly, he never allowed his rage bleed outside.

Then, why now…

“I finally found my nemesis… I won’t give him… to anyone…!!”

His distorted smile made even Nacht feel terrified, that’s how much of joy and anger overflowed from it.

Chapter 5 - Pureblood Party, Assault

More than a week has passed since he enrolled in Magic Academy.

At first he continued to feel discomfort, he was confused by this unbelievable place called Magic Academy, but Takeru was steadily getting used to it.

Although he still didn't understand the lessons, still, life in this place wasn't all that bad for Takeru. At least, people of East Side were kind to Takeru who did not have magic power in him. Although he was spoken of sarcastically, but it was more an issue of pride thinking they are right, they still came in contact with anyone equally.

It was clear that the environment was better in here than anywhere else.

"Kusanagi~, wanna come with us to the newly-opened store with Magical Heritage?"

After school, one of two male students called out to Takeru in a good mood.

Takeru raised his face in the middle of stuffing the notes in his bag.

"Eh… they're selling Magical Heritages?!"

"Oh, so you can't get 'em in the outside? Well, just come, they are dealing only with mass-produced ones without personality, but there's tons of ones with strange usages, so it's interesting."

"Is that so… outside you can get imprisoned for many years just by having one…"

As Takeru responded in surprise, the other, stiff student laughed through his nose.

"Hmph, the bunch on the outside can't comprehend how wonderful magic is. Nikaido-san being the exception. Hey, Kusanagi, even if you come, there's nothing interesting. Rather, it won't be interesting for me so don't come."

With thorns in his words, he spoke frankly and raised both his hand appalled.

"Don't think badly of him. He's difficult, but not a bad guy. In fact, he fell for Nikaido-san who came from outside at first sight, and when you, her boyfriend appeared he has been swallowed by the wave of jealousy."

"Y-yy-you! I've told you not to——don't misunderstand Kusanagi! I haven't given up on Nikaido-san yet! That lovely girl holding the noble 『Aurora』 attribute is not suitable for a thick-headed guy like you!"

Seeing tears appear in the blushing stiff student's eyes, Takeru smiled wryly.

"No… I'm not really her boyfriend though."

"This pure idiot aside… how about it, you coming? On top of wands, they are dealing with sharp swords too."

As he heard that, the colour in Takeru's eyes changed.

"——Seriously?!"

“Y-yeah. What’s with that passion, unexpected… in the inner side world there are many Magical Heritage sword-smiths. Even now there’s a masterpiece with an inscription being born.”

“Are there any katanas?! Japanese swords!”

“? Yeah, they’re quite popular. Manufacturing process of Japanese swords puts a large emphasis on water, so they seem to take in magic well. They are highly regarded in the modern times.”

“…nice! I’m going!”

Takeru gripped his fist and tried to say “I’m definitely going!”.

However, suddenly the cloth on his left elbow was pulled and he looked to the side,

Despite having no expression on her face, Lapis was surrounded by a black aura.

《”…cheating?”》

A voice intimidating enough to give him a chill has resonated inside of his head.

With a spasm on his face Takeru politely refused the two’s invitation. Of course, the two students also noticed Lapis aura and left with a “Next time then.”.

After trying to keep distance from Takeru the entire time, Lapis was now completely glued to him. The chair was put right next to his, and clinging, she wouldn’t let go of his arm even for a second.

“I’ve told you to stay together with me… but isn’t this too close?”

“You don’t want me to?”

“It’s not that I don’t want you to…”

“Then, it’s fine isn’t it.”

Although he was happy about it, there was a little problem with appearances.

The students around went “Isn’t there a pink aura coming from there?” or “They made up *overnight* together.”, and guesses that were hard to classify as either serious or ironic were flying around.

He didn’t feel bad, but the comfort might have been.

Smiling wryly while scratching his cheek with a finger, a simple question has come to his head.

“…reminds me, why did you choose me?”

“?”

“I mean, why did you choose me as your contractor at the very beginning. There’s something a contract procedure with high level Magical Heritages… there’s a need to increase your likeability or something, I’ve heard that when I came to this place.”

“So that’s what you mean. The reason is simple. First, your physique, your muscles and unique corns on the palms of your hands allowed me to discern your considerable prowess with swordsmanship. In addition, I was told in advance that you were a boy coming from

the Kusanagi household by Ootori Sougetsu-sama.”

“Oh, I see. So you had the material to judge whether I’m suitable right from the beginning.”

“Of course, that’s only one of the reasons. So to say, the wavelength of our souls matches… if I were to express it in an easy to understand for humans way——”

After Lapis said up to there, Takeru tilted his head puzzled. She looked up at his face and said.

“——Love at first sight, is what it would be called.”

Her face was as usual. She had no intonation in her voice nor expressions. However, Takeru’s face turned bright red immediately.

It was a very embarrassing line when said face-to-face. Why were the thoughts of Magical Heritages sounding so dangerous when represented in a human way. Suspicious gazes wandered towards him attracted by his suspicious behaviour.

“You have a fever. Are you unwell?”

“…it’s nothing.”

Feeling bashful he wanted to turn to the side, but Lapis suddenly leaned towards him and stuck her forehead against his. Her cool forehead was pleasant, and from the soft lips in front of him a smell similar to lavender was coming.

“You do have a fever. You need to take care and rest——let’s sleep together. Since I can adjust the temperature of my body, it’s possible for me to warm or cool you down. Please make use of me.”

“~~~~……youu, since we are contracted you can tell my condition even without doing that right?! I”m healthy here, healthy!”

“Oh, I’ve been found out. What a shame.”

“Did you turn into Suginami somehow?!”

“I don’t understand what Host means. I just spoke out the error my personality has produced.”

What kind of error is that. Can it be, that the entire time she always kept what she felt and thought inside never letting it outside, and that’s all?

Although Takeru was able to imagine many difficulties, he didn’t bother about them and laughed. The life in Magic Academy was comfortable, and after reconciling with Lapis, there were no more problems.

“……”

However, his heart didn’t change.

Certainly, it was a nice place, but it was also a fact that West Side was running rampant. If a war were to happen once again, either Valhalla or Inquisition will perish completely.

If that happens, there will be a tremendous amount of sacrifices. Surely there would be no

more safe places in the world.

Whether it's AntiMagic Academy or Magic Academy, there was no difference.

But, the place where he should use his power was not here, but outside. The place he belongs to wasn't in here.

First thing he had to do, was to save the person he needs to save.

Takeru overlapped his hands with hands of Lapis who clung to him.

For Takeru——Mistilteinn, Lapis was there.

He already decided in his heart.

"…why are you lovey-dovey…?"

Hearing a voice from behind Takeru turned around.

There, was Mari with a despair on her face as she looked at Lapis and Takeru flirting.

"…while I'm doing my best to fulfil the mission entrusted to me by you, why did you two turn lovey-dovey…?"

"Lovey-dovey you say… don't misunderstand, she's not really——"

"What 'misunderstanddd'! Get away from Takeruu!!"

Furious, Mari tried to pull Lapis away.

However, Lapis moved her body even closer to Takeru and tilted her head.

"We are lovey-dovey, so?"

"?!"

Speechless, Mari wound her hands around Takeru's neck.

"WHYYYyyyyyyyyyyyYYYYYYYYY?!"

"I h-have properly reconciled with her why do I have to be blamed for that…?!"

"I'm asking why do you look like a loving couple! 'Lovey-dovey' she said, 'lovey-dovey'! How did you make a Magical Heritage so drunk with love!"

"I just spoke with her, told her that that for me and you she is very important…!"

"Then what's this newlywed aura?! This girl's expression has completely turned into that of a woman, or rather, into that of a bitch in heat!"

"Don't call a girl 'bitch'! I don't get it, but isn't she expressionless!"

"I'm in heat too so I can tellll!!"

When Takeru reached the verge of falling down as his neck was swung around, he summoned strength and grasped Mari's shoulders.

"Calm down. For now, with this we have the components needed to successfully finish negotiations with Mother and Orochi obtaining method to save Kiseki…! Also we really weren't flirting…!"

Probably, Takeru muttered inside of his mind. And Mari on whom it had temporary effect,

“Nh…! For now I’ll withdraw, but I’ll pursue this matter later on…!”

“By what authority you… well, fine. Are there any results from your side…?”

When he asked her, Mari sat down on the chair next to Takeru with a sullen expression. Moreover, she snuggled up to Takeru just like Lapis did

He was in the maiden sandwich state.

“…really, what’s up with you two.”

“For now, there is. As for transfer magic devices, there’s several of them available to public.”

While hugging onto Takeru, Mari reported the results of her work.

On the second or third day in here, Takeru entrusted a single mission to Mari.

The mission content was to find a way to leave Magic Academy were an emergency to happen, to gather information about the transfer magic. He was told by Mari that they transferred here using an instant charm, in that case a method to transfer from inside to outside is supposed to exist.

Since Takeru was unable to walk around in the town on his own, he asked Mari to do it this time.

As Mari once ran an information store in the border, her abilities could be trusted.

“But those for general public are meant for moving between shelters. They are massive pieces of equipment and it takes seven hours to recharge their magic after a transfer. I know how valuable the transfer charms are… it’s because the materials needed to absorb such an amount of magic are invaluable.”

“So you were unable to find the coordinates of the outside?”

“Coordinates for all shelters are publicly available. Charms are stored in both East and West, but they probably have a considerably tight security.”

“…so by saying there was a result, you meant there was another way?”

As Takeru asked, Mari meekly nodded.

After making sure the last student had left the classroom, she whispered in Takeru’s ear.

“I’m talking about a prototype of a miniaturized transfer magic device that’s formally in development and not yet adopted… their prototypes are said to circulate among several executives.”

“For private use, huh…?”

“Rather, it seems like certain factions have it. In here several of the higher-ups have their private armies. They probably use it to send their troops for their personal matters.”

“…rather than stepping into the academy’s central, it’s better to to aim where guard is thin.”

“Yeah. I know roughly where to get it but… all the guys I can guess that have it are fishy.

Although the transfer magic device is supposed to be prepared by the academy's development department… the one those guys are using is Alchemist-made."

Fantasy Cult

Alchemist. It has been pretty obvious that they were working with Valhalla, but he didn't know that it went this deep.

"Without doubt the inner world has evolved thanks to the benefits from Alchemist's alchemy and science, but their name isn't circulating around in this world. Since they're scum, Valhalla hides their relation to them. But there's someone who doesn't try to save their face, a single person that has strong relations to Alchemist exists… on the West Side."

Fantasy Cult

"West Side huh… troublesome."

"An ancient wizard called Elizabeth. It seems like she's literally a witch from the ancient times. They say she's acting as the Chairman of the West Side."

"…then, the school is inside of West Side's school?"

"No. Since East and West carry out inspections on each other regularly, there's no way it's there. If anything, then it would be in her home."

Takeru fell silent, placed a hand over his mouth, thinking.

Using the device was a plan to use only in an emergency. He didn't think Orochi and others would be as nice as to just send them to outside world, so there was a need to prepare themselves properly.

He knew he was being an ingrate, but aside from the fact that they wouldn't tell him of the situation outside, Takeru has decided to return in order to protect the place he belongs to. He didn't really think of betraying Orochi and others from East Side.

He just wanted to speak with them, and learn.

And if he isn't told, he will enforce this plan.

"There's no other way to escape… if an emergency happens, don't hesitate."

"Yeah… by the way, Mari, are you really fine with your choice to cooperate with me?"

"It's fine. My aim is to atone. For the many lives I have robbed, I'm going to save many. If a war were to occur right now, a lot of people on the outside will die first."

"…staying here is okay you know? You have already made many friends in here."

As Takeru said that, Mari looked up at Takeru's face with a bit lonely expression.

"Don't make me repeat myself. I'm glad that you are worried about me, but the place I want to be in the most is over there."

"……sorry. And, thanks. I'm glad that you say so."

"Also, if I achieve my goal, I'll be able to come meet Ananda and Inia any time. That's the kind of world I am aiming to create."

Mari said while staring into the distance.

There was a mountain of problems ahead, but it had to be done.

When Takeru got a grasp on the sense of mission, the classroom's door was opened with abandon.

A bit startled, Mari and Takeru faced towards the door.

"……"

It was Kanaria. She glared at Takeru seriously.

Since she felt different from usual, Takeru tensed up.

"…Kusanagi Takeru."

Kanaria called his name.

In her hands, there were two sheathed swords.

"Come with me for a bit."

She said so, and turned around.

Kanaria brought Takeru all the way to a construction site devoid of people.

It was a building that was supposed to become a colosseum and float afterwards. Until now, both sides have been using separate training grounds, but because in the future they are planning to do combination training, this building was built.

"Calling me to a place like this, what do you want."

"……"

Kanaria didn't answer, she just stood there turned with her back towards Takeru.

Mari and Lapis were left behind. He didn't want them to be involved in the problems of Double-Edged style.

When he saw Kanaria hold two swords, he could tell to an extent what's happening.

From the two she carried, Kanaria threw one to Takeru.

He caught it with his right hand and tensed up.

Kanaria took a deep breath, then while letting it out she slowly pulled out the sword. She directed its point at Takeru.

"——Kusanagi Double-Edged style certified, Kanaria. Right now, applies for a duel with senior pupil Kusanagi Takeru."

The wind has blown dust between the two, and tension has gradually spread.

Takeru gripped the sword in his hand and didn't move.

"…dueling of two fellow students is prohibited."

"I'm prepared for excommunication."

"…why?"

"Personal reasons. Also, personal interest."

"……"

“Let’s find out who’s stronger, Takeru.”

Wind stroked their cheeks.

Takeru took a single breath, and looked up at the sky surrounded by steel frames.

As he breathed out he moved his left leg backwards, dropped his waist lower and held the sword’s handle.

Then, the blade sounded loudly as he slowly pulled it out from the sheath.

His sword pointed——at Kanaria.

“Kusanagi Double-Edged style initiate, Kusanagi Takeru. This duel——I shall accept.”

There were 10 metres between them. Kanaria stood higher, and Takeru made a stance in the shadow.

As if symbolizing their own way of doing things, the two demons squared off.

And the moment the wind ceased to blow, two storms kicked off the ground heading towards each other.

As for speed——Kanaria was faster.

“——Shh!!”

Kanaria poised her sword above and putting strength into her attack, she swung it straight down.

Predicting that Takeru interrupted his thrust, and kicked off the ground moving in the opposite direction.

The ground split open.

The destructive power released was something unthinkable to be released by a katana. It was as if a dynamite exploded.

Takeru who successfully avoided at the brink of getting hit calmly analysed Kanaria’s movements among the flying debris.

Magic-Sweeping Sword

Neither of them used Soumatou. The moment Kanaria pulled out the sword from the ground, Takeru kicked off the ground and assaulted her.

His blow, was easily blocked by Kanaria’s blade.

“……!”

“……”

No matter how he pushed forward, Kanaria’s sword wouldn’t budge. With this big difference of strength, it was impossible to parry it. Kanaria wouldn’t allow him to slide his sword against hers and escape.

Pressing against each other, the two froze as they were.

“Takeru, why do you fight.”

“……ngh, do you have so much time in middle of duel to ask…!”

"……why do you fight."

"To protect everything I want to protect! In other words, for myself…!"

At Takeru's answer, Kanaria downcast her eyes.

"I see… Kana is doing it for her mother."

With a mournful voice, she explained her reason for holding the sword.

However, the next moment Kanaria easily pushed back Takeru's sword, flames of hatred dwelled inside of her pupils.

"Mother was killed by Alchemist and Inquisition… they need to pay for that…!"

"Nh…so she was killed, your mother that is…!"

"That's right! She was given birth to, used by them, and after using her up they killed her off… even though Mama was so gentle to Kana, Alchemist made her continue to do horrible things!"

"……!!"

As she attempted to push back the blade, Takeru pressed his left hand to on the sword's blade to withstand it.

Kanaria with misty eyes, madness dwelling within put even more strength in.

"Mama protected Kana…! She protected Kana risking her life…! Maybe she wasn't a good person… it might not be weird that she was killed… but she was Kana's only gentle Mama!"

"…Kanaria… you!!"

"Kana will do anything for Mama who died never given any reward…! That's the reason I learned Double-Edged style! Kana will kill anyone for Mama's sake! Even if they are unrelated humans… or you, Takeru!"

Takeru's defence has finally reached its limit.

c-Sweeping Sword
Soumatou!

He triggered it instantly, and read the flow of the blade Kanaria has pushed down.

Instead of resisting the flow, he rode on it.

Riding on the flow released by Kanaria's powerful attack, Takeru jumped back ten metres at once.

Surprised, Kanaria stared at Takeru.

He landed on the ground after being blown away, and once again he took up the sword in cloud of dust.

However, he didn't start attacking immediately.

In response to Kanaria's puzzlement, Takeru opened his mouth.

"…so that's how it was after all."

“……?”

“I thought that might be… half-wood elf, Alchemist… everything fits. I know about you, Kanaria.”

In front of confused Kanaria, Takeru spat out a small breath.

And, asked her sadly.

“You——do you know Suginami Ikaruga?”

Light disappeared from Kanaria’s eyes.

It was as if the source of her anger was thrust in, she lost her expression exhausted.

“…wh-y…Takeru knows…that name…?”

“A few months ago, we engaged ourselves in preventing Alchemist from an experiment to restore elves. In meanwhile, I’ve heard from Ikaruga about you.”

“……”

“About a wood elf called Kanaria she created together with another Suginami…”

“……——”

“I think her name was… Isuka. Suginami Isuka, Ikaruga’s——”

Immediately after that.

Kanaria who showed her weakness, lowered her body down to the ground and momentarily charged at Takeru. In nick of time he blocked Kanaria’s desperate blow. Although there was no need to block it, Takeru received her attack.

In order to speak with Kanaria.

“Wwhy——why do you know her nameeeEEE!”

“Nh, Ikaruga is my comrade! A comrade from the same platoon!”

“It’s herrrrrr!!! She left Mama and me running away ALONE! TRAITOR!! And you’re HER comrade!!”

“Wrong!! That’s a misunderstanding! She tried to save you and Isuka——”

“Spare me this bullshit!! Then why did Mama die alone?! Why didn’t she take Mama together with her! Mama always continued to call her name! While suffering and weeping she called her name! We were together only for a short while, but Kana knows! Just how much Mama was suffering!”

“She tried to…! To save both you and Isuka…!”

“Nh, IT’s A LIEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!”

She pressed on Takeru even further in rage.

His legs were sliding back scraping the ground.

So telling her that won’t work! ——Then!

Takeru activated Soumatou at full throttle only for an instant.

“Kusanagi Double-Edged style——Ghost Light Firefly!”

And released a technique he just learned.

He stopped blocking Kanaria’s attacks and rode on the flow.

Riding on the flow he moved backwards and parried a blow at the last moment. He rotated changing the flow’s direction, and riding on that strong flow he swung it down on Kanaria’s head.

“——Khh!”

Kanaria blocked it with a horizontal slash. Takeru’s blade was parried away, but he didn’t resist the flow. Without stopping the blade he rode on the flow rotating his body and slashed from the opposite direction.

Magic-Sweeping Sword

He didn’t give her time to attack. He activated the Soumatou only at the starting point changing the flow explosively. With no time to rest. With no time to think. He rode on the flow and accelerated with the flow.

Before long, Takeru’s slashes were rotating with a momentum like that of mowing machine’s blades and continued to hit Kanaria.

In front of the technique which seemed like a sword dance, Kanaria was clearly upset.

The difference between physical ability of a human and a wood elf was immeasurable. Even against an enemy in Witch Hunter form, Kanaria was able to stand her own with just her flesh and blood. But now, she was clearly being suppressed. The demon called Kusanagi Takeru who should have had a body of a human, overpowered her.

“Nh, Double-Edged style——Gyuuki!!”[2]

As her last resort Kanaria turned her blade around and released an upwards slash with force similar to that of a dragon raising into the sky, attacking Takeru’s body with tremendous momentum.

Although it was blocked by Takeru, his body was blown far into the sky. He continued to raise up to between the steel frame while rotating.

Kanaria once again held the sword aiming for the place where Takeru was supposed to drop down.

However, even at that moment Takeru did not stop riding on the flow.

Riding on Kanaria’s Gyuuki strike, he raised vertically up and accelerated rotating in the sky.

“Kusanagi Double-Edged style——”

At the same time as he began his fall, Takeru’s voice echoed.

Kanaria admonished herself with ‘damn it!’ in her mind. High altitude, rotation, fall velocity. The technique activated when those three are brought together.

The conditions for triggering it were the best. This blow, even if it’s Kanaria she won’t get unscathed.

However, since there’s a limit to how one can change trajectory in the air, it was a difficult technique to land a hit with.

It was a technique which would not hit if the recipient realized it.

Kanaria jumped away from the spot she anticipated Takeru would fall to.

However, the next moment——she saw something unbelievable.

In the middle of rotation fall, Takeru kicked off one of many convoluted steel frames.

“H-he changed trajectory by kicking off steel fra——!”

Takeru fell straight at Kanaria assaulting her.

She tried to escape further, but Takeru already predicted that and was ahead. And,

“——Mantis Slope!!!”

It clashed into her, the demon slaying blow.

Although Kanaria tried to block it, she was unable to do so completely with an awkward posture.

Her sword broke, and was blown away by the impact.

Of course, Takeru fell down diagonally and hit the ground, but he released strength from his entire body and activated Soumatou. He put both of his legs together on the ground, folded both of his hands together behind his head as if trying to protect it, and bent his knees in 〈 shape, touched the ground with lower legs, thighs, back, and rotated forward over his shoulders.

Magic-Sweeping Sword

Unable to stop the momentum, Takeru’s body was blown away.

However, he was able to disperse majority of damage through various parts of his body.

After being blown away by the momentum for the second time, he normally landed on the ground.

His muscles screamed, but he was somehow able to decrease the falling damage.

Takeru confirmed the state of his own sword, and walked to where Kanaria was.

Kanaria was lying on the ground where she fell, and convulsions were running through her body. It wasn’t that she was slashed, she was unable to block the all-too-powerful blow and the recoil has spread out throughout her body.

Yet still, her pupils with hatred dwelling in them were directed towards Takeru.

Takeru closed his eyes and sheathed his sword.

“It’s over. I will no longer fight with you.”

“…kf….fuu…uu…”

“I don’t know what happened between Ikaruga and Isuka, and what was the outcome. Isuka might have really died alone, maybe Ikaruga killed Isuka… Ikaruga is the only one who knows the truth. It’s not a burden I should be carrying.”

“…uUuu…uu…”

“That’s why, go and make sure yourself.”

“……nh……!”

“Go and meet Ikaruga, Kanaria.”

Not listening to Takeru’s words, Kanaria pulled out a knife from her waist and stood up trembling. Takeru didn’t withdraw nor attack.

Kanaria set up the knife to the side and confronted him.

“…Kana won’t believe it…! She abandoned Mama…that doesn’t change…!”

“……”

“Pull out your sword…Takeru!”

“……”

“Pull it outt!”

Even though Kanaria shouted at him, Takeru didn’t pull out his sword.

He stared straight at her, unmoving.

Kanaria’s teeth let out a rattling sound. She lost herself in anger, fear, and grief.

“WAAaAAAaaaAAaaaaaAaaa!!”

She closed her eyes, and started running towards Takeru aiming the blade at his abdomen.

But before the blade could reach him, someone stepped between the two of them.

A dull sound of blade piercing something echoed.

When Kanaria opened her eyes… an azure-coloured girl stood in front of her.

“…Lapis…!!”

Takeru was speechless, he held Lapis’ shoulder.

However, Lapis looked towards Takeru with a blank look on her face.

“No need to worry. This kind of wound wouldn’t even kill a human, a laceration like this cannot destroy me.”

“…dumbass…even so, you…”

“Please don’t give me that crap. Who is the dumbass here. You are my host. What kind of irresponsible actions are you taking here?”

“……”

“Was the promise to stay together with me a lie?”

Lapis turned her back on Takeru and seriously asked him. He swallowed the explanation he was supposed to say, and “Sorry.” he apologized.

“I won’t forgive you.”

“…sorry.”

“I will not forgive you.”

“I apologize.”

“I’m not going to forgive you.”

“I said I’m sorry…”

“I definitely won’t forgive you.”

He looked at her with confusion in his eyes, but Lapis was adamant.

Takeru stared at her, and while scratching his cheek he looked for words Lapis wanted to hear from him.

“I will stay with you forever. I won’t break the promise ever again.”

“……very well. I will forgive you.”

She turned around with a twirl, pulled out the knife from her abdomen and faced towards him.

She didn’t smile. She didn’t seem happy. However, satisfaction could be felt from her. Takeru took the knife from Lapis.

Behind Lapis, Kanaria has collapsed.

“……nh.”

“…Kanaria, you should come with us. We are going to AntiMagic Academy… we’re returning to the outside.”

“……”

“Come with us. Go and meet Ikaruga.”

Takeru got on his knees and reached out towards Kanaria.

Confused, she stared at Takeru’s hand. Although she hesitated for a moment, she reached to Takeru timidly.

However, the moment their hands were about to touch,

“——Ara, Kanaria? I wonder if you intend to betray us?”

Hearing a voice from the sky above, Takeru turned towards it in a hurry.

But then suddenly something had blown into him, breaking his posture.

Lapis pushed Takeru’s body. The moment he tried to understand what happened, something like an electric current has wrapped around Lapis’ body.

“——Lapis!!!”

《“Don’t——touch me.”》

Although he tried to stretch out his hand to her, Lapis sent her voice directly into his head.

If he touches the current, Takeru’s flesh and blood body won’t be able to withstand it. It was frustrating, but he was unable to do anything.

He clenched his teeth and glared into the sky.

A purplish-red woman was looking down at Takeru while sitting on the throne that floated in mid-air.

“You… who the fuck are you…!”

“Ara ara, a mere empty asking for my name, what an ignorant brat.”

While fanning her face with a western fan the woman identified herself.

Fantasy Cult

“My name is Elizabeth… a leader of Valhalla and Chairman of Magic Academy’s West Side. People call me 『Almighty Witch』…nice to meet you.”

Eliza slowly raised the fan up.

And as she did so, the electric current restraining Lapis’ body has slowly rose up.

“Lapis!”

“Sorry, but I’m taking this Sacred Treasure. It’s too heavy for a lower organism like you to hold… only a pure-blooded witch like me is appropriate for it.”

She raised Lapis right beside her, then stroked Lapis’ cheek with her long nails.

At the same time Kanaria got up on her knees and shouted to Eliza.

“Eliza, you were tailing me! It’s different from what was decided! My mission isn’t over yet! Don’t get in my way!”

“Ara? It’s because a dirty wood elf like you was sluggish that I had to go all this way by myself right? Moreover, for you to reconcile with the enemy… that’s why you can’t trust those mixed demihuman races.”

“…I didn’t betray you or anything, Kana’s enemy is Inquisition and Alchemist!”

Kanaria tried to desperately justify herself to Eliza, but Eliza just spat out a sigh while fanning herself.

“What a simple naïve child… once a demihuman loses our trust they can’t live in West Side again. No matter how many excuses you repeat, okay?”

“Wait! Listen——”

“Unfortunately, I have no intention of listening. Off with your head.”

When Eliza folded her fan, magical circle appeared below Kanaria’s feet.

Before Kanaria could jump away, the magic activated.

“《Phalaris Bull》”

Along with the magic name, a wall has appeared around Kanaria with countless holes in it gradually covering her.

When Kanaria’s figure turned no longer visible, deafening screams resounded. High temperature and steam have raged from the red holes in the walls.

“That’s quite nice voice. It’s hot right? It’s a magic I made referencing to the original torture instrument.”

“ELIZA! ELIZAAAaaa!”

“Don’t worry. The next destination you will be transferred to is already determined. Be glad, there are people with a wonderful hobby of tormenting demihumans… becoming a plaything of pure-blooded high ranks will be your next job.”

Eliza’s cackling laughter echoed.

When Takeru ran to help Kanaria, preventing him were countless people in red robes emerging from the ground.

“…bitch…!”

“An energetic empty aren’t you… if you were chosen by the Sacred Treasure your abilities must be quite high right? It’s good entertainment, show me your proficiency. I’ll see how far can you go with pureblood adversaries as your opponents.”

When Eliza swung her fan while looking down at him, Lapis and Kanaria disappeared swallowed by distortion in space.

Takeru held the sword unmoving, and shook with chagrin on his face.

“Now everyone, it’s time for a practical! There’s no such thing as failures for our best students! The ones who crush this cockroach will have greater status and prestige bestowed upon!”

Along with the voice of Eliza who sat on the throne, the group of people in red robes surrounded Takeru. Their faces were all young. Probably, they were West Side’s students.

When he looked around, he saw several dozens of them. There were also few standing on the steel frames who aimed their wands towards him.

Kanaria was definitely reporting to the West Side and was used as a decoy to lure out Takeru so that they could obtain Mistilteinn. In other words, Takeru was lured into a trap.

“You guys, aren’t you supposed to be Kanaria’s comrades…”

When he spoke to the enemy army, a mocking laughter has responded him.

“Our only brethren are members of Pureblood Party.”

“Impure beastmen should be destroyed.”

“Only those who tasted sorrowful history are our comrades.”

Hearing their heavy voices, Takeru refuted.

“The worth of a human doesn’t lie in their blood or magic power… if anything, people like you who abandon your comrades are simply scum…! Aren’t you the humans just like she is!”

“She deserves death. She will serve to dispel the eternal curse on the humanity.”

“Don’t just pick out the targets to hate so conveniently…! That’s why all you have in your head is war!”

Takeru roared. But the Pureblood Party just laughed. They laughed at him.

“Dirty-blooded Empty.” “Don’t talk as if you know anything.” “Our determination

continues since the human race was created.” “Pain.” “Suffering.” “Dying.” “Cries.” “Loss.” “Our blood remembers everything.” “Blood remembers.” “Our hatred!” “Our resentment!” “Know our grief!”

Pureblood’s wands were tinged with magic and emitted light.

Takeru held his sword, his eyes shone with red.

“Our bliss is destruction of empties alone.” “Our hatred will become one.” “Our ambition will become one.” We are Pureblood Party.” “We are crystallization of witch’s grief.”

” ” ” ” ” ” ” ” ” ” “Revenge will be ours!” ” ” ” ” ” ” ” ” ” “

“——Fine by me! Bring it on! I’ll cut through that determination of yours!!!”

For the first time in a very long time blood really rushed to Takeru’s head.

Try not to kill if possible. But only if possible.

If the enemy comes at him with intention to kill——there won’t be any complaints if they die!

Along with an explosion of anger, Takeru kicked off the ground at full strength.

One of the Pureblood Party who released a powerful magic bullet was defeated in an instant.

However, the enemy’s attack didn’t let him rest.

Immediately after the front row shot, the back row released their bullets predicting Takeru’s destination.

They were like bayonet corps with no gaps in defence, they were incredibly disciplined.

After taking down three people, Takeru hid behind a pile of wood.

Immediately after he spat out a breath, magic bullets approached moving around the pile.

“——Tracking bullets!”

He cut through the bullets with the sword, but the amount of bullets looming increased.

“Don’t look down on me just because all I have is my flesh and blood!”

Takeru bent his knees and jumped with abandon.

He rose up to the magician who tried to snipe him from the steel frames above, he cut through the wand and hit him with the back of his sword.

Takeru landed on the steel frame, and made his advent in front of the cowards who aimed at him from above.

“This guy… he’s a monster!”

“Just now, it was the same swordsmanship Kusanagi Orochi uses… don’t underestimate him, he’s skilled!”

A sorcerer warned everyone openly, however,

“It’s too late to notice that!”

Takeru's speed was beyond the sorcerers' recognition.

The steel frames with only one way to escape were overwhelmingly advantageous to Takeru.

He cut down five people grouped together and immediately looked below.

"——Start the salvo!"

Along with a single person's command, several dozens of magic bullets swooped upon Takeru.

Takeru kicked off the steel frame jumping in the air.

"He's flying! Aim at where he's falling!"

Although Pureblood Party used a very reasonable tactics, but there was no way Takeru wouldn't predict that much. In middle of his flight he placed a foot the steel frame on the opposite side and kicked off.

"——Wha!!"

While the enemy was astonished, Takeru kicked off another steel frame and continued to head to the bottom like a pinball. Like that, even if they predicted where he will fall they wouldn't be able to hit him.

And the moment he kicked the lowest steel frame,

"Double-Edged style——Single Wheel!"

After kicking off the steel frame and landing on the ground, Takeru triggered the omnidirectional drawing technique while still maintaining the momentum.

The blow released from a state where he twisted his waist and body to the limit slaughtered five enemies.

Maintaining the momentum after landing he successively took down one enemy after another as if he was gliding.

"Too fast…! For an empty without any benefit from a Magical Heritage——guahh!"

Takeru entered under his bosom, and hit him with the back of the sword in the chin.

He cut down a dozen of people at once, disrupting enemy ranks.

Then he noticed there were only ten left.

After finally stopping his flow, Takeru exhaled. Even though he learned from Orochi how to use the flow, with this many opponents the burden on the body was still tremendous.

He wasn't immobilized yet, but he had to hurry and go to where Lapis was.

Right now, Takeru was able to faintly feel Lapis' whereabouts, but he was unable to tell what was done to her in the location she was transferred to, so he had to hurry and chase after her.

Takeru held the sword and cut an enemy nearby.

One of the enemies used a protective barrier, stopping the sword for a moment. The

enemies weren’t stupid, although it was difficult to perform defensive and offensive actions simultaneously, with a number like that cooperation was their forte. They intended to shoot him the moment his attack is blocked.

“Don’t think you can stop me with something like this!!”

However, Takeru’s sword was fortunately made with anti-magic material. He was able to destroy a barrier with a single powerful blow. When the shattered magical power scattered, Takeru cut down the caster.

The Pureblood Party recognized Takeru as a threat, and stopped using simple combat tactics.

Three of them have teamed up making up an operative procedure together.

“Don’t underestimate pureblood sorcerers…!”

Air started rustling, and a magical circle flashed under Takeru’s feet.

It was too late to avoid, feeling five times his body weight pressing on him he fell to his knees.

“Weight increasing magic! The range is narrow but… he won’t move for a moment!”

One of the enemy laughed fearlessly confident of their victory.

However,

“Gh-uUuuUUUuuUUuoOoOo!”

Takeru rebuilt the posture immediately and forced his body that was creaking under the weight.

While hearing the sound of muscles rupturing, he jumped.

Outside of the range——above the enemies.

“He jumped under that pressure!”

Not even giving the three time to scream, he sent the magicians casting the spell to oblivion.

Takeru stood on top of the three corpses, pierced the ground with his sword and spat out a deep breath.

Hot breath leaking from his mouth and shining red eyes made him look like a beast.

The remaining six members of enemy forces lost the will to fight seeing Takeru’s onslaught.

“…E-Eliza-sama…”

One of the six directed his line of sight at Eliza who was in the sky and asking her for help.

Bored, Eliza looked at the sorcerers’ battle with Takeru with frosty gaze.

“He’s like a grasshopper.”

She likened Takeru who destroyed the Pureblood Party.

“Pathetic. Being at mercy of enemy speed and only shooting basic magic bullets… you went impatient and forgot the operative procedures. Even though I taught you that the sorcerer’s weak point is the slow attack you still did that… it seems like bringing you young ones to get some experience was a mistake.”

Eliza lamented disappointed by her students as their magic teacher.

“Ahh, fine already. Let’s hurry up and pluck the bad buds while it’s still early.”

She folded the fan and lightly raised it up slightly.

And with a rotation of the fan she released magic power from her body outside.

Magical circles expanded in the air.

Abnormalities appeared immediately. Although only one magical circle was needed to use magic, Eliza deployed ten of them. All of them were huge and their colours were different.

Everyone of the Pureblood Party looked up at Eliza pleadingly.

“Eliza-sama…! Please grant us postponement!”

Hearing consternation in enemy’s voice, Takeru also looked up.

He understood what was she trying to do at a glance.

She was going to wipe out her allies with magic.

“Chairman’s order. You guys, hold down this Empty at risk of your lives. If you do that, on your tombstones it will be engraved that you were honourable pure-blooded heroes.”

Eliza looked down on the sorcerers below with a ridiculing smile and focused her magic. Multiple magical circles overlapped in one place, and where they have intermingled the colour changed to purplish-red.

Takeru felt a chill on his skin, and goose bumps appeared on his body.

That thing is dangerous. Takeru’s survival instinct sounded a warning.

Seeing the multi-coloured magic solidify, Takeru tried to retreat from the spot, but when he tried to move weight increasing magic has assaulted him again.

“We won’t let you… escape!”

Moreover, the rest of the enemies tied up Takeru with magic chains.

“She’s going to kill you together with me! Why would you go this far?!”

When Takeru shouted, the Pureblood Party didn’t hesitate, only directed their hatred at him.

“There’s no way someone like you who lived and came from outside will understand… our hatred!”

“Our parents were killed by Inquisition… and my little sister is rotting away treated as experimental material…!

“And my best friend!”

“My brother!”

“We were all born on the outside… we had no choice but to live in the border, insulted by empties, suffering humiliations! My long cherished wish is to kill as many empties as possible…!”

Tears appeared in their eyes as they accepted their deaths.

For kids to carry such resolution, it was madness. In his head floated an image of vengeful Kyouya. He didn’t deny anyone revenge, but directing unjustified resentment at those who weren’t at fault was pointless. It was all wrong.

And the leader who incited such incorrect way to exact revenge was…!

“Elizabeth…!”

Takeru turned gaze full of anger towards Eliza.

Eliza giggled and swung down the fan.

The geometric patterns on her magical circles wriggled in accordance to her movements. With a heavy bass sound, the deployed magical circles shattered.

And in front of the fan, a small light which was a mass of magical attribute has solidified.

“My attribute, 『Almighty』 covers all attributes other than ancient properties. And if the properties that normally repel each other mix together… did you know what will it turn into?”

Eliza’s mouth distorted.

The surroundings lost their sounds. Sand under his feet vibrated and suspended in the air against gravity.

“Destruction—— Property Collapse 《Quietus》.”

All Takeru could do is receive the destruction with his body.

The mass of magic previously in front of the fan fell in front of Takeru’s eyes.

The purplish-red wicked condensation of magic had been clad in electricity momentarily ——

——And was crushed to pieces.

Destruction filled Takeru’s field of vision. He was unable to see or feel anything.

The magic intermingled as the explosion similar to pollution mowed everything.

The massive disaster called explosion has covered the entire coliseum’s construction site.

“Ahhahahahahahaha! Beautiful right?! An ancient vampire devised this to destroy the hateful sun! How beautiful are those fireworks that bring destruction!”

While Eliza let out loud laughter, the destruction on the ground continued.

There was no need for Pureblood Party to hold down Takeru in the first place. That’s how vast range Eliza’s magic covered. He didn’t have enough time to escape right from the beginning.

The explosion subsided a minute after it started.

He could tell even with his vision hampered by dust. The construction site had a huge crater as if a meteorite has crashed into it.

All living beings have died out and inorganic have turned into sand. At this sight, Eliza tried to laugh satisfied,

——And failed.

“…what’s this…I wonder…?”

Eliza’s face twitched and she turned towards the ground.

At the deepest part of the formed crater there was a space wrapped by a oval rainbow-coloured barrier.

In the centre of it was Takeru and four Pureblood Party members who fainted.

As well as——the girl who was the source of protective magic.

The girl brushed away the muffler from her shoulder and pushed up the edge of the hat with her finger.

“If it isn’t quite a flashy move… that rotten character of yours where you dispose of your allies makes me relieved.”

The Witch of Aurora——Nikaido Mari dispelled the protective magic and glared at Eliza in the sky.

Ignoring Eliza on whose face cracks appeared because of anger, Mari immediately looked at Takeru’s body worried.

“Takeru, are you okay?”

“Mari… you…”

He wanted to ask her why did she come, but Mari looked down hiding her face behind the hat.

“I’m not apologizing. It’s Takeru’s fault, leaving me behind…”

“……”

“…I was… worried…”

Hearing Mari’s crumbling voice, Takeru felt apologetic.

There was no way he could predict it would turn like this, but the fact that he made her worried was an inexcusable fact. It was also a fact that he would have died if she didn’t come.

“I’m sorry. Thanks to you coming I’m saved, Mari.”

He honestly apologized and thanked her.

Mari raised her face, and looked at Takeru with a blushing, happy expression on her face.

“A-as long as you understand, a-all right.”

Embarrassed she turned her back to Takeru and looked up to the sky again.

In response to the hateful glare from Eliza, Mari also returned a glare.

“Certainly, you are the outside’s Witch of Aurora… weren’t you called the ‘never killing witch’ were you… so you are that bonus that came here by sticking to Mistilteinn?”

Being called a ‘bonus’, blood vessels appeared on Mari’s temple.

“Thanks for bringing up my nickname. So you are the chairman of West Side? What is an old woman like you doing here?”

As she was called ‘old’, this time blood vessels appeared on Eliza’s temple.

It was an exchange of insults specific to quarrels between women.

“After using that kind of large magic neither Senate nor East Side will stay silent.”

“As long as Mistilteinn becomes mine the power struggle in inner world will be a trivial

problem. Also, it’s hardly a problem anyway… majority of the Senate are our allies.”

“Mistilteinn…? What’s your goal?”

“Even if I look like this, I’m the leader of purebloods you know? I have one goal… annihilation of empties. Cleaning this world up. That’s what I need that sword for.”

“…hmph, simple. Easy to understand, that helps.”

Hearing Eliza’s purpose, anger inside of Mari rose.

“It’s because there are witches like you that outside won’t accept us.”

“What a coincidence. I can’t let a cowardly witch who’s called ‘never killing’ breathe or exist in this world.”

Mari and Eliza realized in an instant that their presence and beliefs are perfectly inverse.

Takeru realized that their clash is unavoidable, and tried to clench the sword.

“Takeru, chase after Lapis-chan.”

“…I can’t do that can I.”

“She’s your precious sword right. Then go to her.”

Mari took a step forward and turned with her back to Takeru.

“…a message from the Orochi guy. He said that your collar had no explosive function right from the beginning.”

“?! Master said that?”

“Yup. Also, ‘I ain’t coming to help ya’ he said.”

Takeru touched the collar with his finger, thinking.

He didn’t know what Orochi’s goal is. But if he said that there were no explosives in the collar, it must have been because Orochi trusts him.

He strongly grasped the sword’s hilt.

“I get it. But you can’t afford to fight against that woman alone. She’s strong… I can at least act as a decoy if I stay right.”

Standing next to Mari, Takeru poised his sword.

Having an ally called Mari was incredibly reassuring. Even if he can’t do it alone, they could fight together.

“Let’s defeat her together, Mari!”

“Takeru, can I be honest here?”

“Yeah, what is it.”

“In short, you’re a hindrance.”

Takeru almost dropped his sword from shock.

“——That’s horrible?!”

“Sorry. But you really are a hindrance. If you are here, I can’t fight seriously.”

It wasn’t a joke, Mari’s expression was serious.

Thinking of it, Takeru has never seen Mari when she was serious. He didn’t know too well what kind of power the girl called Witch of Aurora held.

However, once before during the mock battle tournament he witnessed Mari’s magic. It boasted of incredible power. He agreed that she might not be able to fight with him being there with only his flesh-and-blood.

“I’ll take care of this here, quickly finish this and follow you immediately.”

Mari closed one eye and smiled to Takeru.

Despite feeling a bit worthless, Takeru accepted Mari’s proposal and was about to chase after Lapis.

“Ah, Takeru wait a sec.”

“——Should I help after all?!”

A bit happy, Takeru looked back.

“No, stand here and jump.”

“….ha?”

“Jump here, jump. Pyon. I’m not going to check how your wallet sounds so hurry up.”

Although he didn’t understand her request, confused he stood next to Mari and jumped.

“《White Rabbit (Large Leap)》”

When a magic name suddenly left Mari’s mouth, a magical circle appeared under Takeru’s feet.

Inevitably, Takeru landed on the magical circle.

“He?”

When he looked below, the magical circle emitted light to its limit.

He had a ridiculously bad feeling.

“Hey, it can’t be that you——”

“Have a nice trip——make sure not to die!”

Immediately after Mari encouraged him, the magic activated. For a moment Takeru thought his body was lifted, but then he was blown far away with a momentum of a rocket.

“HeyheyheyheyheyheyHEYHEYHEYHEY
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!”

Mari stared at Takeru who was blown away until he was no longer visible.

After confirming that Takeru landed on a department store floating far away, Mari turned to the front.

In the air, Eliza sat on the floating throne and elegantly fanned herself with a western fan.

“…is the farce over?”

“For you to wait until we finish talking, isn’t that quite gentlemanly of you?”

"It is entertainment you know? A little exercise. Since there's no sorcerers in this shelter who can be my opponents, I thought I'd warm myself up a little."
"Hee, it's been a while since I fought with all my strength. If you say so, then I won't hold myself back okay?"

“West Side isn’t that weak as to struggle with such a brat. Also, I don’t want my entertainment to be disturbed by such a worm.”

Eliza’s mouth distorted, and laughed showing a glimpse of her fangs.

“Entertainment you say? I think that for a granny like you, going against me would be overworking yourself though~?”

Mari showed an evil smile that won’t lose to Eliza’s and triggered flight magic.

Rainbow-coloured rings appeared on both of her legs, and her body floated.

When she rose up to the same height, Mari and Eliza faced each other.

“It is entertainment you know? A little exercise. Since there’s no sorcerers in this shelter who can be my opponents, I thought I’d warm myself up a little.”

“Hee, it’s been a while since I fought with all my strength. If you say so, then I won’t hold myself back okay?”

“Show me how far can the 『Aurora』 property go against my 『Almighty』.”

“As you wish, I’ll show you what the utmost limits of light can do.”

Both of them glared at each other, and painted the air with magical circles.

Eliza’s 『Almighty』 which held properties of many colours.

Mari’s rainbow-coloured 『Aurora』 which was the most powerful of the light properties.

Both of theirs magical circles of countless colours filled the sky.

And——

“Let’s go, girlie——!”

“——Prepare yourself, you shitty old hag!”

The two of them clashed their way of magic against each other.

Chapter 6 - A Place to Return to

Takeru was literally sent flying by Mari and landed on the roof of a floating building.

He almost slammed into the ground on the roof, but an invisible cushion magic wrapped his body and absorbed the impact.

However, the momentum wasn't fully suppressed and he crashed into the fence while rotating.

"~~~~Tell me something before you do it…!"

Raising his body from the recessed fence, he confirmed his location.

Apparently, he was on top of a flying department store, children playing with toys and ice cream-eating student couples looked at Takeru with surprised expressions.

"Hello… d-don't mind me~…!"

He apologized readily, and checked the damage on his body. Just by moving his legs and arms a severe pain ran through his body, if he ignored it he was still able to move his body.

From the pouch at his waist he took out first aid supporters and wrapped them around his legs and arms.

When he looked around after performing first aid, he saw something like a gate in the fence.

It was a magical tube was used for moving between buildings or to descend to the ground.

Takeru dragged his aching body to it, and jumped inside the tube.

Similarly to sliding, he slipped through the boggy magic tube.

While watching the cityscape through the translucent tube, Takeru sharpened his spirit.

It was in order to feel and find Lapis' whereabouts.

《"Lapis! Can you hear me?!"》

When he tried calling her, he received no reply but he was able to roughly feel her localization.

"…in the south-west direction… quite far away…!"

Takeru solidified his will, passed the filter which had a lukewarm texture, and landed on the next building. At the same time as he landed he started running towards next tube and then dived into it.

It was overwhelmingly faster than running. The moments he wasn't exhausting himself he was recovering.

Running from one tube to another, he aimed for the target point.

From here onwards it's West Side… I need to brace myself.

He put his hand on the sword while sliding, and closed his mouth tightly.

He raised his alertness, it was at that time.

Right next to the tube Takeru slipped into, something was sent flying and approaching him.

“——Those guys!”

It was Pureblood party members flying on the catalysts. They wanted to avoid fighting in the East Side which would make them stand out, and waited until Takeru came to the West Side.

There were two of them. Only two, but there was nothing Takeru could do to them while they were in the air.

The enemy were already aiming their wands at the tube.

“Can’t be helped!”

Takeru pulled out the sword and of all things he cut up the tube.

It was the safety equipment at work probably, but Takeru stopped along with the effect propelling his slide.

While the torn-up tube started self-repairing itself, Takeru had already jumped outside.

Although there was no scaffold in the distance he could jump to, fortunately the enemy’s position was right beside him.

He successfully managed to catch on the enemy’s flight catalyst at the last moment.

The enemy’s balance was lost, he started going round and round while falling quickly.

Takeru straddled the falling catalyst, grabbed the enemy’s head and pressed his blade against the enemy’s body.

“Rebuild our posture and shoot the other flight catalyst! If you don’t…!”

“Don’t look down on me, rather than shoot my brethren I——”

“That so!”

During the fall, Takeru slowly sank the blade into the enemy’s shoulder.

Because of the incredible pain, the enemy screamed.

“I-I got it! I’ll do as you say!”

The enemy got cold feet, and starting the flight catalyst’s jet he rebuilt their posture.

And then he fired magic bullets towards another person straddling a catalyst.

The flight catalyst of the other enemy started releasing smoke, and continued to drop down to far away lands.

Takeru sharply narrowed his eyes and put the blade against the enemy’s neck.

“It ain’t over yet… continue flying towards that Eliza woman’s mansion.”

While terrified, the enemy responded with a trembling voice.

“——《Aurora Barrage》!!”

At the same time as she circled in the air, Mari released a storm of light bullets from several hundred small magical circles.

The light bullets flew with a momentum akin to that of a gatling gun flying straight, attacking Eliza who was sitting on the throne.

“……《Daidalos》” Rejection of Wings “

Eliza activated countering magic.

Generated black wings wrapped around her as if protecting her. When the light bullets approached with a loud sound and touched the wings, they were parried away.

Before the wings could spread out, Mari dived right in front of Eliza.

“——《Aurora Blade》!!”

A huge 20 meter long blade composed of rainbow-coloured particles closed onto Eliza.

However, Eliza deployed a new magic with a cool expression on her face.

“《Hades Claw》”

Darkness appeared on Eliza’s nails, it was pitch black and enormous.

The light and darkness clashed, and a huge blast roared from the contact point of two opposing forces.

“…nh……!”

“Stupid girl, remember one thing. Aurora magic… it’s certainly powerful, but in the end, it’s light-type magic. Its weakness is darkness property right? Aren’t you being too naïve thinking you can defeat me with brute force?”

Eliza gracefully fanned herself with the western fan she held in one hand, and like a teacher she pointed out Mari’s weak point.

『Aurora』property is a highly versatile magic, but it has strong and weak points. It is weak against『Blood』,『Gloom』,『Rotting』, and『Poison』 which are properties created from darkness, therefore even the aurora magic that specializes in destructive power, upon collision its power is significantly decreased by about half.

Of course, the aurora property was weak against the darkness property too but…

That magic power density is no joke…! The operative procedure was also devised to be resistant against light properties…!

Looking at the claws that clashed with the light blade, Mari analysed the quality of Eliza as a witch.

Both “《Daidalos》” Rejection of Wings and 《Hades Claw》 required a considerable amount of magic power and a complex operative procedure. For sorcerers using the original darkness property, it would require three people to build the operative procedure and supplement a necessary amount of magical power. And yet she did it alone, coming up with that in just a moment was no easy task and required skill.

『Aurora』‘s attack with highest destructive power, the 《Aurora Gate》 would be able to break through it, but there was no opportunity to build up such a large spell.

“Ancient Wizard’s tend to do that don’t they, over-relying on the strength of their properties and exposing their weak points. The magic road where you rely on your talent will only make you end up second rate. If you put enough effort in your light magic, you would be able to use darkness magic too… but you have neglected that effort haven’t you.”

“…I know that already!”

“Speaking of witches, being young is just disadvantages you know? In order to master my 『All Talents』, I have spent many years to cover all magic properties… unlike a brat like you who’s only sharp!”

Eliza brandished the fan she held in her hand.

A countless number of new magical circles were deployed, and magic was triggered in Mari’s direction.

“I wonder, can a witch of your level block this?”

Along with the mockery, magic was released. Pillars of various-coloured light appeared.

Nh——It’s not a simple Cannon! It’s darkness-type, but they are all of different properties!

Mari dispelled her light blade, flew backwards and expanded protective magic.

A protective magical wall was a simple magic. In order to protect herself from each respective attribute she build various operative procedures for resistance, building many layers of the wall.

The laser has repeatedly hit the wall, one by one reliably breaking it down.

“Khh——UUuUuU!”

The magical laser didn’t stop. Mari continued to build new protective walls repeatedly building up the procedures but——when a new attack was released from an unexpected direction, her response was too late.

It was different from darkness-type property. It gave off a dazzling white light.

——*Light property?!*

All of Mari’s protective walls shattered, and the cannon hit her in the left shoulder.

“Ga——ha!!”

Mari’s body was violently blown to the side, and she barely managed to rebuild her posture.

But when she immediately raised her face groaning in pain, Eliza was already right beside her and put her hands on her neck.

“I’ve told you right? My property is 『All Talents』. It matters not whether it’s light, darkness, fire, or water. There’s no good or bad points in it. I can use any magic other than that of the ancient properties, I don’t need to build up complex operative procedures to

deal with conflicting magic properties.”

“…ka…fu…u…”

“You have my praise for instantly using body strengthening magic to reduce the damage but… you aren’t a second-rate but a third-rate after all. Like this, I can’t have much expectations of you in the future… how unfortunate, even though we finally have a valuable 『Aurora』 property…”

“…ghh……!”

“It’s my education policy to pluck out bad buds early, farewell girlie.”

Eliza’s 《Hades Claw》 curved turning into sickles. Although Mari was suffering in pain and unable to breathe as she was strangled, when she saw the nails swung up, a smile appeared on her face.

“You too…rely on…properties…”

“Hmph, all talk no action aren’t you?”

“I’m unlike you——I’ll rely on it with pride!”

Mari mustered all of her power, and rebuilt 《Aurora Blade》 on her right hand.

Eliza made a bored expression and immediately expanded protective wall of darkness.

Easily blocking the sword of light.

“That’s why I’ve told you, Aurora magic won’t——”

“I wonder about that! Property reversal! ——《Eclipse Blade》!”

Immediately after Mari laughed fearlessly, Eliza was horrified.

The light blade Mari gripped changed its base colour from rainbow to jet black.

“Eclipse… you said?! Impossible, 『Moon』 ancient property?! Why do you possess magic that only exists in concept?!”

In front of upset Eliza, cracks appeared on the protective wall of darkness property.

“Magic is constantly evolving…! If you think I haven’t been attending to AntiMagic Academy’s magic research then you were wrong! 『Aurora』 isn’t a property as simple as you think it is!!”

“…no way… impossible…!”

“『Sun』 and 『Moon』——I have knocked them down from the seat of ancient properties!”

Ancient properties were called as such because they were impossible to recreate with any other properties.

However, if it’s possible to use one of them by applying other properties, that property will be removed from the category of ancient properties.

Just like in the past it was made possible to use 『Tower』 property by applying 『Fire』 and 『Earth』… just like it’s possible to use 『Sky』 property by applying 『Water』…

Mari was able to use 『Sun』 and 『Moon』 by applying 『Aurora』 property alone.

“…y-you brattttt!”

After Eliza’s darkness protective wall was broken, she expanded a light protective barrier. 『Moon』 property was darkness-type. It should have been weak against a protective wall of light with resistance operative procedures on it.

She acted thinking so——however.

“《Helios Blade》!”

Immediately after Mari crushed the protective wall of darkness, her sword transformed into sword of light with 『Sun』 property.

Eliza’s face turned pale, and she released her hands from Mari’s neck to concentrate on building the protective walls. She tried to place a protective wall of darkness in rapid succession but——

“This——?!”

She couldn’t keep up. Mari’s sword of light changed properties in a flash.

It was an absurd speed of building up operative procedures. Moon, Sun, Aurora. Eliza didn’t know any other witch who was capable of rotating magic of different characteristic like that other than herself.

Multiple layers of protective wall broken at incredible speed in front of her.

“I won’t kill you…! But I’ll have you taste pain until you feel like dying!”

Mari’s outcry echoed.

Determining that she would lose at this rate, Eliza abandoned a fair magical match.

Of all things she decided to take the action of a scum.

She outstretched her fan in the direction of a place far away, and expanded a purplish-red magical circle.

The place she was aiming at was East Side’s floating building.

Mari knew that the building she aimed for was the East Side’s student dormitory.

“?! No way, you…!”

To Mari’s horror, Eliza grinned.

“Think of this too, as of study about war.”

After saying so, Eliza shot 《Quietus》 magic at the student dormitory.

Property Collapse

The bullet of distorted light flew towards the dormitory at high speed.

Mari immediately interrupted the battle and followed the light bullet.

Pouring all magic she had into wheels on her legs, she flew quicker than wind.

“Make itt——!!”

Flying at speed an eye can’t catch up to, Mari was succeeded in overtaking the light bullet.

She opened her arms widely, and expanded huge magic to protect the student dormitory.

“《Aurora Field》!”

Raising magic to maximum output, she activated a magic decreasing the bullet’s speed.

Property Collapse

After the 《Quietus》 light bullet entered the magic’s range, its speed has decreased and it slowly moved towards dormitory. Determining that 《Quietus》 power and range was too big to block, she moved under the bullet and hoarded all the power she had available in her right hand.

Property Collapse

She didn’t need any tricks if it’s only changing the trajectory.

“DORYAAAAAAAAaAAaaaaaa!!”

Mari filled her hand with rainbow glitter and punched the bullet with her fist.

Magic power exploded, and the light bullet’s trajectory was moved higher.

The speed-decreasing effect of 《Aurora Field》 was dispelled, and the light bullet rose up to the sky.

And the moment it touched the barrier preventing Sanctuary from invading in, it caused a tremendous explosion.

Damage… there was none. The buildings caught up in the explosion were also unscathed.

Unable to feel relieved, Mari turned around to where she left Eliza behind.

However, Eliza was no longer there.

“Grr… she ran away…!”

Bitterly clenching her teeth, Mari chased after Eliza. In this fierce battle her magic power was consumed intensely.

“There’s no time to collapse…! Wait for me, Takeru!”

Mari focused herself and resumed her flight.

In order to protect Takeru who promised to take her back with him, she rushed to the West Side.

Thanks to the captured flight catalyst and the enemy sorcerer, Takeru was able to take the shortest route and head towards Eliza’s mansion.

The far West Side had less signs of life in it. There were fewer floating buildings, and noticeable things like luxurious houses were standing out instead.

They had strangely old-fashioned medieval designs. AntiMagic Academy’s buildings were built mimicking the aesthethics sense of witch hunting’s birthplace, but these were sticking out even more. Although it wasn’t a bad thing to love old art, this sight made it evident that West Side was structured on basis of ancestry and pedigree.

“An exclusive residential area huh… so this is the den of West Side’s executives?”

“…y-yeah.”

While listening to the answer of his captive, he look around for Lapis’ whereabouts. Then,

he raised a voice after noticing something.

“That’s wrong direction! You——”

He turned towards the captive again and shoved the sword’s edge towards him. That moment,

The head of the captive who was steering the flight catalyst was pierced by a magic bullet.

“?!——A sniper!!”

He was being aimed at from somewhere.

Even if he knew from where he was shot, he couldn’t do anything about it. He couldn’t defend himself either and was shoot through the leg and flank.

The flight catalyst lost its magic supply, and was falling. Although there was a safety magic embedded in flight catalysts, the one-seater only ensured safety of the driver.

When the flight catalyst crash-landed on the ground, Takeru’s body hit the ground and received the damage from the impact.

He rolled away from the debris, and his body finally stopped moving.

His body was all beat up. Right arm broken, legs useless. Some of his internal organs were ruptured. Takeru clenched his teeth, and using the sword like a cane he tried to stand up.

Takeru’s head was full of noise, but he was able to faintly perceive a rustling sound.

Around Takeru who did an emergency landing, appeared executives who came from the residences, they were the Pureblood Party members. On the street and in the trees shades, he could see their figures in the window’s, holding snipe-type wands.

“…prepare to fire!”

A superior-like person raised his voice.

It was a desperate situation. As he was losing consciousness, Takeru only could seek help.

Ouka, Usagi, Ikaruga, Mari. Even the Student Council President and captain Kurogane were fine.

Anyone, anyone would be fine.

Right now, I can’t afford to stop here.

“…Lapis…!”

With an anguished expression, Takeru called her name.

He was reminded of his own helplessness when he has only his body. Just how much he was relying on Lapis… and just how much he needed her. He was unable to put it in words. It was because of this despair that he realized that in full.

I need you.

“…GU…Oooo!”

Takeru stood up, he stood up in order to pick up his only partner.

In order to meet her, to become partners again.

Just seeking help won’t work. Just relying on others, won’t work.

Move. Move move move move.

I promised not to give up on anything any more. I decided to become strong.

I resolved myself to protect Kiseki, my comrades… and my partner!

I can’t——be stopped in a place like this!

Takeru pulled out his sword. The only thing he was proud of, his only strength.

“No matter the obstacle in front of me… I will cut the way open…!!”

He stood up.

In order to boast of his strength. In order to stood proudly in front of those who are important to him.

He heard the sound of enemy charging their magic. The death’s invitation mercilessly surrounded Takeru.

The day was nearing its end already, and the sky was dyed in colours of twilight.

“……nh……?”

He noticed a shadow standing on the roof of a house full of enemies, and looked towards it. He could feel an intense gaze from it.

That guy, looked different from the other Pureblood Party members.

It was a black man. He looked insolent, or maybe exaggerated, his figure standing there with arms open made it seem as if he rebelled against everything.

“…that…guy…”

The hero always comes late, that’s what people say.

The hero will definitely appear whenever there’s a pinch, that’s what people say.

But there was no way something that convenient would happen.

Reality is different. Reality is always ruthless.

Whether it’s coming late, or coming whenever there’s a predicament,

What was determined then——was 『Despair』.

“You are invariably hot-headed and stubborn.

Seeing you alive, makes me from the bottom of my heart happy, joyful,

And makes me sick, Kusanagi Takeru.”

Takeru didn’t forget. There was no way he could forget.

That voice, that appearance, that plight.

Standing with its back to the setting sun, that despair!

“…Haunted…!”

Takeru’s body forgot fatigue and pain, and was invigorated by anger.

He robbed Mari of her family, wiped out the 15th platoon… the root of all evil that took everything from Kyouya and Yoshimizu.

Necromancer Haunted. Takeru’s unforgivable nemesis.

“Ohoho, whenever I see you, there are wounds all over your body. It’s very fun to watch, but aren’t you tired of that yet? Or maybe you like that kind of thing? Ah, are you a maso? Noo, I hate maso’s! I have hate for the same kind and it’s disgusting!”

“Bastard…! Why are you here…!”

“I am I am I am here~. After all, Mari-san came here too right? Since you took her away from me several months ago, how many days do you think I have spent crying into my pillow. Ever since then I have been longing for this day where we who are like Orihime and Hikoboshi will cross our paths again.”[3]

“I will never let you take Mari!”

“What are you saying now, looking like this. You have no Mistilteinn, no comrades, moreover, you are surrounded by enemies. What can a human like you do?”

While exaggeratedly looking up at the sky, Haunted provoked Takeru.

It was frustrating but he couldn’t refute. Although he didn’t give up yet, the chances of him winning were equal to none.

Nevertheless, in front of an existence overwhelmingly more dangerous then the army of sorcerers, Takeru poised his sword.

The Pureblood party member who was wary of Takeru called out to Haunted who stood on the roof.

“Haunted-dono, we are grateful for your assistance. However, this is a mission entrusted to us by Eliza-sama, please do not meddle!”

Haunted laughed off the speech, and looked displeased at the sorcerer.

“…assist you? I had no such intention so don’t worry.”

“Is that so! Then, please your eyes with the sight of this filthy empty getting elminat——”

“——No, the ones eliminated will be you guys?”

The sorcerer who was interrupted looked at Haunted's face in shock.

No one had noticed when the massacre of the Pureblood Party had began. From under the sorcerer's feet black thorns stabbed upwards. The thorns penetrated the sorcerer's bodies and pierced their brains.

Then the thorns have broke out through the mouth and eyes, blooming into flowers of variant.

"…Captain? What happ——?! UWAAAaAaaaa!"

One of the subordinates noticed his superior's ghastly death and started fleeing.

Seeing that, everyone in the surroundings started running and scattered away like little spiders.

"Hihi, hi——hiiiiiiihahahahaHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!"

Haunted didn't let them escape. The despair's chosen one spread death without discrimination.

A black swamp appeared under a house, and a huge thorn appeared from inside.

The hell of escaping Pureblood Party members began. A scream has covered by another scream, and the residential area was covered with cries of agony. Not a single person escaped, not a single person was left alive, everyone was preyed upon. After swallowing everyone, 《Belladone Garden》 manifested as a single huge flower.

Garden of Despair

Haunted went on the flower variant's back, and slowly gliding from the roof he landed on the ground. Then, he slowly walked towards Takeru, swaying.

"…you…. your own comrades…!"

"Comrades? Me and them? You're being rude. Don't lump me with that discriminating bunch. I love all human races with or without magic, without any prejudice. Praise humanity. Humanity is wonderful! That's my belief!"

"——You madman…!"

Takeru thrust his sword at Haunted who approached him from the front. The tip of the sword had definitely pierced through the heart at the centre of his body. Haunted didn't even pull out the sword, as if it was natural, he moved forward with his heart still pierced by the sword.

"You can't kill me, nope. It's not good at all!"

"Gh, what's your goal?! Was there a need to attack them?!"

"Ohhh?! There was a need! A great need!'

Takeru pulled out his sword, and the moment he tried to slice Haunted from his head to chest, Haunted extended his arms and wound them around Takeru's neck.

"Guhh…!"

"Yeees, now don't move~. Even if I look like this I'm really good at playing doctor, I know a lot about human body. If it hurts then please raise your hands—?!"

Heat was released from the hands gripping his neck, an abnormal change occurred inside of Takeru's body.

It was some kind of magic. Takeru struggled trying to escape, but Haunted's arms were stone hard and wouldn't let him go.

However, despite having his neck strangled and raised up, Takeru felt the pain in his body disappear. The wounds done by the sniper bullets also disappeared without trace. When he realized what was being done to him, Takeru's mind was filled with suspicion and anger.

"What's the meaning of this…?!"

"I have recovered you! You were unable to move like that right?"

Haunted released his hands and Takeru fell to the ground pulled by gravity.

After being able to breathe again, he took a deep breath and once again mercilessly cut Haunted.

It was a direct slash straight from the top of his head.

Haunted's body was split in two from his head to his chest.

However, when Haunted hit his head with both his hands, the torn apart body let out a wet sounds and was returned to its original form. Although the bones were a bit slower, they fused after a mere few seconds.

It was appropriate to call him undead[immortal].

"Ahh~. There's a mountain of things I want to tell you, Kusanagi Takeru, but let's leave the questions and answers for later. First we have to silence the outsiders, don't you think so?"

Takeru, who glared at Haunted looked around only momentarily. The Pureblood Party had surrounded them and was in close proximity.

Surprisingly, around a hundred people gathered. Manifesting an attitude saying they definitely won't escape, they foolishly approached in a flock.

"Haunted you bastard! You betrayed us!"

"Betrayed? What foolishness are you saying… the ones to betray were you purebloods right? The Senate's decision regarding Mistilteinn and Kusanagi Takeru's treatment is pending, and they were entrusted to the East Side. The ones who broke the pledge are you guys."

"Don't mess around! There's no way someone as loyal to Eliza-sama as you would listen to Senate's bullshit!"

"Wow, the latter guys made such naïvely accurate analysis I feel like giving him a candy and the former ones had such a completely idiotic retarded delusions! Listen everyone! I only sacrifice myself for my own beliefs! Based on my own desires! Even if I feel a thrill whenever I'm injured I pass on being a flunkie of some cowgirl!"

When Haunted emphasized on his thoughts, the enemy's vigilance further strengthened.

Everyone had "Madman" on their lips, describing him.

“Ahha! Seems like you didn’t understand~how incredibly regretful.”

Not looking regretful in the least, Haunted pulled out the sword 『Dáinsleif』 from his waist with a laughter and poised it.

Inevitably, Takeru and Haunted stood back-to-back.

Impossible alliance. Impossible ally. Impossible and improbable, the despair and the demon have joined forces.

——No such thing.

The moment their joint struggle started, the next moment they turned around and their swords collided.

“——I’d rather fucking die than stand back to back with you!”

“——Nice! That’s precisely why you are my enemy, Kusanagi Takeru…!”

Seeing an opportunity when the two exchanged blows, the sorcerers begun their attack.

Takeru and Haunted parried their swords, and started their respective battles.

Riding on the momentum after being parried, Takeru plunged into the enemy army. Vigilant of Haunted and impatient, almost all of the enemies left their houses and crowded densely on the centre of the road.

Like that, they were unable to maximize the effect of ranged magic attacks. They couldn’t shoot magic bullets because of the possibility of hitting their allies.

Takeru entered under the enemies, and steadily but consistently slaughtered them.

With the momentum after being parried, spinning round and round like a ballerina Haunted rammed into the enemy army. Ignoring magic bullets aiming for him, he cut up enemies as he pleased.

Even as his body was pierced, or subjected to restraining magic he wasn’t bothered. He brushed them off like mosquito bites.

It was as if two tigers were shoot into a flock of fawns.

One of the sorcerers stepped back frightened.

“Ma…Magical Knights, forward! Destroy the targets!”

Against the two beasts trampling over them, the Pureblood Party instructed to bring out what could be said to be their trump card.

Takeru and Haunted who were rampaging around could hear the sound of metal rubbing against each other.

When the sorcerers hurriedly retreated to the back, armour-wearing knights have appeared have appeared from behind them. They weren’t Dragoons, those were thin power suits. In their hands were swords of light created with magical power.

The Alchemist’s latest suits in combination with sorcerers knowledgeable about swordsmanship.

There were a dozen of them. They had a stupidly-looking mannerism and made a

formation, raising the swords in front of their chests.

In front of the new threat, Takeru and Haunted——started laughing.

“No way a sword——”

“——Is going to work on me is there!”

Magic-Sweeping Sword

Takeru jumped forward by using Soumatou, and closing distance momentarily he cut down two magical swordsmen at once. Haunted created a swamp under the feet of knight in front, and ignoring the armour pierced through him with a thorn.

The two’s rampage didn’t stop. There was nothing the enemy was able to do against Takeru’s speed and Haunted’s immortality.

Exploding debris, resounding screams, in the gaps between magic the two performed a mad sword dance.

They cut down everyone who stood in their way, and at the end——they clashed squarely once again.

Overlapping their swords, each of them glared at his sworn enemy.

Heaps of corpses surrounded them. No one was alive and breathing other than those two.

“Bastard, what are trying to do…! Cut this out and answer me!”

“The reason is simple…! This is not where you should die, that’s all!”

“Don’t fuck around…! There is no reason for you to keep me alive, there is no reason for you not to kill me!”

As Takeru raged, Haunted laughed evilly.

“I remember it… that wonderful struggle, that wonderful defeat!”

“I remember it too! That shitty massacre from back then! That bitter victory!”

In response to Takeru’s adamant attitude, Haunted’s face loomed forward.

“I reject you with everything I have. Your shallow claims, your shallow salvation, your shallow mask. All of that shallow goodness disgusts me. Through my long long life whenever I saw self-satisfied people like you, all that of those filthy bugs and their shallow beliefs have despaired in front of despair. They all cried calling for help!”

“……!”

“But you were different! Despite being shallow you stood up never giving up and broke me! You also confronted other threats than me, even in front of Kusanagi Kiseki’s fate you never gave up!”

Haunted relayed his passion to Takeru with an ecstatic expression.

“I’ve seen it all, your struggle! Kusanagi Orochi and Kurogane Hayato walk the path of compromise, you alone choose the pipe dream to save everything! To think a powerful existence like you still existed in this world! It’s so thick! It will be my delight to crush such thick salvation! You are my enemy——『Hope』!”

After mercilessly pushing away Takeru’s sword, Haunted looked into into his face with

madness in his eyes.

“That’s why I will neevvverrrrrrrr allow you to drop dead in some place I don’t know of or become my ally!! I will not acknowledge the rematch with you unless it’s in appropriate place, appropriate time and after you regain appropriate power!”

“…ghu.u…!”

“I’ll say it frankly, without that you aren’t complete! Right now you are a small fry who can’t be my opponent! Reclaim Mistiltein, only then we will face each other in a match!”

Haunted blown away Takeru’s sword with all his strength.

Unable to ride on that flow, Takeru was blown away and crashed into the wall of a house.

Even as he collapsed, he kept glaring at Haunted.

Haunted turned his back towards him, and with a smile as great as possible he raised his left arm up.

“Tell Mari-san that I’m sorry and can’t meet her. After all, she will surely come here.”

“……”

“Now then——let’s meet again on the battlefield, Kusanagi Takeru.”

A bubbling black swamp appeared under his feet, and Haunted’s body slowly sank into it.

Takeru was unable to stop him.

Or rather than being unable to, he didn’t even try.

Right now I have no power to fight with that guy, he realized the obvious.

His sword pierced the bricks on the ground and he roared into the sky. It was a humiliating declaration of war. He had his wounds healed, ended up being saved, and mocked that he’s incomplete.

The only thing Takeru had, his pride was hurt.

Even though he knew that already, he was pointed that out exaggeratedly.

Takeru was full of hatred. He hated the man called Haunted. Just like Haunted wouldn’t forgive Takeru’s existence, Takeru could not allow that man to exist any longer.

“Definitely…! I’ll definitely cut you down one day…!”

In order to settle the score with his sworn enemy, Takeru engraved the pain and conviction in his demon eyes.

The sun was sinking and the sky was dyed with azure.

Lapis is waiting. I need to hurry.

Takeru switched his attention immediately and ran into Eliza’s mansion.

Eliza’s residence was in an underground space where West Side’s pureblood faction was meeting.

Lapis was in there. She was suspended, trapped inside of a semi-transparent cube-shaped

space.

It was exactly the same thing that was used by AntiMagic Academy's tower with Magical Heritages, something manufactured by Alchemist company. Even Sacred Treasures were unable to get out of this barrier without a contractor.

Lapis opened her eyes and from inside, she moved her gaze towards the purplish-red woman sitting on the throne.

"Hey… I wonder if Magical Heritages see dreams?"

Suddenly, Eliza asked her a question. Lapis once again, slowly closed her eyes.

"I do not know how it is for other Magical Heritages, but at least I myself do see them. They are not fantasies or desires, only memory of the past."

"Can it be for a clear reason like memory maintenance?"

"No, it's probably a way of reflecting upon the memory that have left a deep impression on me in the past. 'Memories' is a correct expression."

Hearing that, Eliza burst into laughter.

"Wait wait, an inorganic matter like you receiving 'deep impressions'? 'Memories'? You sure are saying strange things… your hearts, your minds are artificial right?"

"The principle of souls dwelling inside of matter has not been clarified yet, but principles of soul dwelling inside of humans are also unknown. Your brains and our magical circuits are only information processing apparatus. It is the soul that's responsible for giving us a will. In both case, there is no difference when it comes to the soul."

"Don't make me laugh. I never admit that inorganic souls and our souls are the same."

"That does seem like purebloods, your thinking is dominated by stereotypes. I also thought the same until just recently, I won't deny that."

Small convulsions have ran through Eliza's cheek, she stood up and folded the western fan.

"You see, I think that objects should stay objects. After all, it's something created by humans, it should be used without any complaints right? No one wants for souls to dwell in objects."

"…that's wrong. I know of at least two people who wished for that. Those two, have wanted me as I am."

"You as you are? An incredibly weird Magical Heritage… no, I wonder if I should call you 『Sacred Treasure』?"

Eliza approached the cube and placed a hand on the wall in front with abandon.

"Whether it's a gods toy or a humans toy, it's all the same. You aren't supposed to have your own will. Seeing your own toy talk is disgusting, is it not."

"…are you scared? Scared that us Magical Heritages will rebel against you, that's what you think don't you? It's shallow thinking from third-rate SF novel."

Hearing that, Eliza's face distorted.

She took out a silver knife from the cloth wrapped in the valley of her chest and pierced the cube.

"Hey, do you know what's this? Spirit silver, a knife made out of material that can deal damage to the soul… once you are pierced with this, I wonder what's going to happen?"

"……"

"It's fine if we try and see, but I'm going to give you a chance."

"……"

Eliza scraped off the outer shell of the cube with the knife's blade and sent a sidelong glance at Lapis.

"Become my *thing*. If you contract with me, I'll forgive your soul's existence."

"……"

"However, you are not allowed to speak a single word. You will just respond to my requests without talking back. All you will do is fulfil my wishes."

Eliza's request was in parallel with the attitude Lapis had previously. She desired an instrument that only fulfilled her wishes. There was no need for the contractor's will or feelings. All she had to do is to fulfil the requests.

As an object. As a sword. As a Magical Heritage. As a Sacred Treasure.

That's the correct way… until just recently, Lapis thought like that.

"……then, what is your wish?"

"That's obvious isn't it, make witches the only race left in this world. With support of your God Hunting form, it would be possible to destroy the world in just a few days right? After all, it's power that can even kill gods…!"

With sparkle in her eyes, she stroked the outer shell as if she was stroking Lapis cheek.

"God Hunting form is not something a human soul can withstand. By using me you will only destroy yourself. You are unable to handle me."

"Ara! You, despite sticking to your contractor's soul, I wonder why can't you feel anything as you look at me!"

Eliza slowly hid her face with the fan she held in her hand.

When a sound similar to that of air freezing resounded, Eliza's hair has casually danced against the forces of gravity. She vigorously folded her fan once again revealing her face.

There was a change in Eliza's appearance.

Her black pupils and whites had inverted colours. Peeking from behind her lips were sharp fangs. She was paler than before and her skin was eerily cracked up. That appearance was undeniably——

"I, am not a human. A vampire… a descendant of the race that was destroyed in the previous Witch Hunt War."

“……”

“Unlike your beloved master, my body too is that of a demon from the past. My magic power quality and quantity is also finest. Don’t you think I’m the best contractor for you, who produces a small amount?”

“……”

“How about it? Become my thing. Your desire is to fulfill your contractor’s wishes right? Grant me my wishes… that’s the only thing that gives your existence any value.”

While damaging the outer shell with a knife, Eliza proceeded with her negotiations and intimidation.

Of course, Lapis wasn’t agitated in the slightest and just cast a cold gaze at Eliza.

“My apologies, but since I do have the right to choose, I refuse.”

“…right…to choose, you said? I wonder what are you dissatisfied with.”

“By using human representation I will make it easy to understand. Firstly, your soul is not that of a vampire. You are not a true apostle, but a degraded copy that became a vampire after being born. Even if you can fool people of the West Side, you cannot fool my analysis.”

“……”

“Secondly, even if you are an outstanding witch, and even if your soul would be that of a real vampire, the difference between my Host’s worth and yours is like heaven and earth.”

“……”

“Thirdly, I genuinely hate you for insulting my Host. Basically, your existence is not to my tastes. An old hag with thick make-up even on her pitifully small soul is far, far away from being to my taste. I’d rather die than snuggle up to your soul which has a putrid smell wafting from it like a rotten egg covered in vomit and left inside sewers.”

“……”

“For the above reasons, I refuse to be bound by a contract with you. I used a vulgar representation to fit the level of your minuscule soul, but I am honestly uncertain if I have conveyed it well enough. I expect an age-appropriate response from an old woman like you.”

After declaring, Lapis closed her eyes.

She was expressionless and blunt, however in her eyes dwelled a firm will.

“My Host——is Kusanagi Takeru-sama only. If I am to be used by anyone other than that person, then I choose death.”

In response to Lapis clear statement, unnoticed, Eliza erased her expressions.

And,

“I see… I get it. Then.”

She abruptly swung the spirit silver knife and pierced the cube.

The moment her hair turned disheveled, new cracks appeared on Eliza's cheeks.

"I don't need you any longer. In the first place, I've been told by Senate's purebloods to destroy you… I'm fine either way."

Her facial expressions and behaviour was cold, but Eliza's anger was like a bottomless pit.

On top of having been pointed out that she isn't pureblooded despite being in the pureblood faction, she was denied by an inorganic existence. There was no way she wouldn't be furious.

A Magical Heritage without a contractor is powerless. And without Takeru Lapis cannot confront the threats, without Lapis Takeru could only use a simple sword.

Lapis herself didn't know why have the gods created weapons to kill their own kind. She didn't know why weren't they able to exhibit power on their own and required a contract with the user.

However, Lapis didn't think it was bothersome.

She herself… was happy to exist like this.

Because that person is there, she exists. Because that person desires it, she exists. Although that definition remained unchanged, something warm was dwelling inside of Lapis' chest.

For the first time since this distorted occurrence of being born happened, she felt happy.

Therefore, Lapis didn't give up. In order to take Takeru's hand once again, she didn't give up.

She gazed forward. In the direction her beloved Host was in. Putting her feelings in, she continued to call him. Saying 'I'm here'.

"No matter how long you wait, your master won't appear you know…? It's about time my subordinates bury him. What a shame, inorganic one."

"…no."

In response to Eliza's words, Lapis shook her head.

"My Host is already here."

Eliza laughed off what Lapis said.

However,

"Don't touch my sword…!"

It was a hoarse and distorted voice.

With unwavering conviction and tenacity, it was a voice of someone who struggled.

Eliza turned around vigorously, and clearly saw that figure in front of her eyes. A boy who was heavily bleeding. A boy no different from an insect.

However, the light dwelling in his eyes spoke of the strong person that won't give up on anything.

Mistilltein’s contractor, Kusanagi Takeru.

One that carried a demon soul in human body, a mixed breed Eliza hated the most.

The man similar to an insect she thought would disappear in a place she doesn’t know of, stood in front of her. She opened her eyes widely and dumbfounded she turned her body towards Takeru.

“…ara… oh no… a cockroach has made it this far… I have to kill it… and disinfect the place.”

Takeru spat out a clot of blood from his mouth and wiped his mouth with a dirty sleeve.

“Try it if you can… cockroaches are tenacious.”

“What are my subordinates doing… there are insects in my mansion…… I need to call some people… it’s filthy.”

“Sorry, but I’ve made them all sleep. The only one remaining is you, Granny.”

He returned the sword to the sheath and glared at Eliza.

“Oh no… it’s itchy… insects are here…. it itches.”

Eliza’s appearance changed.

The chapped skin on her face spread, and she started to scrape the cracks with her long nails. After the make-up broke off, Eliza’s face collapsed.

What peeped out from below the crumbled parts, was a rotten purple meat.

Apostle vampires were immortal, but without a true ancestor their flesh wouldn’t stop rotting away. No matter how one delayed it with magic or technology, there was a limit to stopping it. In the modern times it was possible to embed only the cells in their body to increase its physical ability and make it semi-immortal, but it was impossible to perform that on an apostle who was already an undead.

Moreover, being a vampire also brought on negative effects.

“Itches…! Itches itches itchessssss!”

While scratching her face with, Eliza turned her black pupils towards Takeru.

“It’s your fault…! It’s because you insects… it’s because there are humans in this world… I…! ——I always have to taste this kind of blood-sucking urges!”

“So you’re a vampire huh. Then you can’t live unless you drink human blood right? Witch’s blood has magic power mixed in so it’s no good… so what are you going to do after you destroy humans?”

“In the modern you can make any quantity of human blood! That’s why there’s no need for humans in flesh! If there’s no humans I will be able to remain immortal without having to taste this kind of impulse! If there’s no humans——I’ll be able to remain beautiful forever!”

Eliza continued to scratch her skin while repeating “itches” countless times.

Looking at her condescending, Takeru shook his head and sighed.

“How stupid… in the end, your beauty is just papier-mâché. No matter how much you delay it with magic, what’s underneath is still your real face right. If you destroy things in order to protect such a thing, I won’t tolerate it.”

“Shut up, shut up shut up shut up!”

“Rather then covered in that heavy make-up, that rotten appearance of yours looks more beautiful to me.”

Takeru unexpectedly said the same thing as Haunted. Eliza who scratched herself while repeating “itches” finally exploded with anger.

She shook her fan, and magical particles released a loud sound.

“What do you know! What do you know about my eternal suffering! As if you would understand my grief!”

“As if I knew. I don’t care about you. Even if my soul is that of a demon, I have my pride as a human called Kusanagi Takeru. I’m absolutely unable to sympathize with someone can only delay and hide herself!”

After denying and discarding Eliza’s desires, Takeru turned towards Lapis. A little bit uneasy, she was staring at Takeru. That anxiety of hers has reached his heart.

That’s why, with eyes full of confidence he relayed his feelings to her.

“——Come! Lapis!”

He strongly outstretched his right hand and called his greatest partner. Lapis opened her eyes wide, and responded along with releasing a hot breath.

“Yes, Host!”

The bond between the two of them connected once again. Tougher than anything else, and more precious than anything bond.

There was nothing that could stop the power born from that bond. Even if it were a cage created to seal Sacred Treasures, it definitely wouldn't be able to stop it.

The sealing cube that covered Lapis shattered instantly like glass.

"——The latest sealing device?! This easily?!"

While Eliza was astonished, Lapis reached out to Takeru.

After their hands overlapped, Takeru pulled her to himself and hugged the slender azure-coloured girl to his chest.

"I made you wait."

"No, there is no problem. I thought that you will definitely come."

Lapis looked up at Takeru expressionlessly as usual.

At her usual attitude, he laughed happily.

After which, he glared at Eliza.

"…I have never really liked this chant… but it's perfect for the current situation."

"I think so too."

"Let's subjugate her then——partner."

"Understood, Host."

Lapis' body turned into azure particles which floated around Takeru.

When Takeru raised his hand in front, an azure-coloured magical circle appeared under his feet.

Desiring with supreme ardor——
"Summis desiderantes affectibus——"

Along with the familiar words of power, his battle has begun.

——The Hammer of Witches
"——Malleus Maleficarum!"

The scattered particles turned into an armour which wrapped around Takeru's body.

This feeling of his body being reborn from head to toe was very nostalgic.

He shook his right hand strongly to the side, and squeezed his fist.

What his fist was gripping, was his beloved familiar sword, Godslaying Mistilteinn.

Witch Hunter form, complete.

《"Now——let's begin the witch hunt."》

"At once!"

Takeru held a sword and ran towards Eliza.

"Mere human and Magical Heritage… you dare to confront me, the king of immortality! Very well, I'll have you realize why people call me Almighty!"

"Don't get full of yourself you fake!"

He moved the sword to the side and rushed.

Eliza in front of him shook the fan with abandon.

In response to her move, pillars of flame appeared from the empty floor and approached Takeru.

《“Annoying, avoid.”》

As told to by Lapis, Takeru leaped up high in order to escape from the pillars.

However, the pillars of flame swelled like dragon’s tail and were swung towards Takeru in the sky.

“!!”

When he was barely licked, Takeru twisted his body in the air and swung his sword.

If it’s Mistilteinn that has an outstanding anti-magic effect, cutting through flame of this degree was something easy. Takeru raised the sword up high,

“Double-Edged Style——Mantis Slope!”

Rotating forward, along with his fall he released a powerful blow.

Eliza looked at Takeru’s moved with a bored expression and laughed. And then, allowing her nails that extended long to cross with his sword, receiving the entirety of Takeru’s blow.

“Wha…!”

“Don’t loooookkkkk——downn on vampiresssssssssssssssss?!”

Along with a cry she released her claws and blew Takeru away.

She had tremendous strength. Takeru slid on the ground absorbing the shock, and poised his sword again.

《“Those nails… a Magical Heritage. It seems to have an effect of returning the attacks impact back at attacker to a certain extent. Host’s attack has been rendered powerless the moment it touched the nails.”》

“Moreover, she moves pretty well…”

《“Even rotten, she’s still a vampire. Although her bodily strength isn’t as great as Witch Hunter form’s, it surpasses human’s by far.”》

Hearing Lapis’ analysis, he strengthened his vigilance in close combat.

In the middle of underground cavity, Eliza with her face full of cracks mocked Takeru.

“I mean, you know… all that grandstanding, and all you can is cut? I’m a witch you know? Do you understand?”

Eliza smiled leisurely, bent her hips and stroked the floor with her western fan.

“Cockroaches that enter people’s houses need to be kicked out as soon as possible right ——you two, have you forgotten you entered the tiger’s den?”

Showing a glimpse of fangs from her mouth, Eliza’s eyes were dyed black.

Chills ran down Takeru's spine, and it happened immediately after. Even though the underground space shook, it wasn't like an unexpected monster has appeared. The walls and floors of the dome-shaped underground space suddenly lit up.

It wasn't a simple light, but a magical circle.

Filling walls and floors completely——a countless number of magical circles.

"…hey…hey hey hey…"

《"This is…"》

Takeru displayed impatience, and Lapis too muttered it was beyond her expectations.

《"Each of the magical circle hold a different property… so this is 『All Talents』 ancient property…"》

Before Lapis could speak, Eliza laughed loudly.

"Even if you noticed there's nothing you can do right?!"

One moment she raised her foot with a gesture of a queen, and then suddenly hit the floor with her heel.

"——《Dies iræ》(Raging Requiem)!"

The magical circles filling the walls released light to their maximum.

"Lapis! 《Twilight Enchantment!》(Grant of Twilight)

With an immediate judgement he issued an order, triggering Mistilteinn's intrinsic magic.

Immediately after the barrage started.

Every wall, floor, ceiling. From the magical circles carved in there, Fire, Water, Ice, Thunder, Earth, Wind, Darkness, Light, Holy, Unholy, Cut, Thrust, Strike.

Magic of multiple properties assaulted Takeru.

"!——Damn ittt!"

Takeru fully expanded the Soumatou (Magic-Sweeping Sword) and began intercepting it as if dancing.

The magic was a basic magical attack 《Bullet》. Magic power was simply collected at one point and released at high speed. However, the magical bullets Eliza released came from all directions and their density was several times greater than normal.

Moreover, each of them had a different property and dealt additional damage the moment it landed.

If it continues for long, Witch Hunting form won't hold out.

It was impossible for Takeru to block them all. The magic bullets which touched the blade were absorbed, but other bullets fired at the same time could not.

The immeasurable amount of bullets has tore through Takeru's armour.

"You sure are doing your best~, I could watch this forever."

Eliza made a throne appear, sat down on it and fanned herself while looking from above.

She was full of gaps in her defence, but Takeru couldn’t afford to do something like attacking.

Grant of Twilight
《“Host, Twilight Enchantment can be sustained only for a minute longer.”》

“I know…! Once it expires just block them! Continue as you are now!”

After a short exchange, Takeru continued the mad dance.

Eliza was leisurely watching it at first,

But seeing Takeru continue to block the magical bullets, she frowned.

“…that…cockroach and inorganic…!”

She stood up from her throne and bit her nails.

When she looked closely, she saw that Takeru’s armour had the scraped off areas repaired. Absorbing the magic, a part of the absorbed amount was used for repairing the armour. Thanks to that, there was no damage to Takeru himself.

Moreover, Takeru’s movement accelerated when he was using an enchantment.

There was no backlash from the magic bullets when the absorption effect was activated, but the impact was applied to the sword when it was blocking the attacks. Takeru took advantage of that impact’s flow and accelerated even faster than by using Soumatou‘s assistance. Faster than eyes could chase after him, he only left behind after-images which made him look like he had clones.
Magic-Sweeping Sword

It continued for a long time, and finally the barrage has ceased to come.

The aftermath of the sword dance turned into wind and stroked dissatisfied Eliza’s cheek.

Takeru stood intact with a shining blade in his hands.

“……Lapis.”

《“Roger. Enchantment reversal, flexible material release.”》

Along with Lapis’ instruction, the blade shined even further.

The azure particles went on rampage.

After absorption, magic power was transformed into the『Twilight』property and raged like a tornado.

“GOOOOooooooooo!”

Closing the distance all at once, Takeru changed the sword into a giant greatsword and swung it down at Eliza’s head who sat on the throne.

Eliza didn’t move. She looked at Takeru’s movements bored.

The moment the blade clad in magical power almost reached her,

ast Ston’s Reflecting Mirror
“《Alice Mirror》”

Sitting on the throne and resting her cheek on her hands, Eliza spoke the magic name.

An enormous magical circle appeared in the air. The magic that appeared between Takeru

and Eliza released a shine akin to that of a mirror.

Protective magic——I'll cut through it as is!

Takeru did not bother with it and swung down his sword. Magic swept down colliding with the emerged mirror.

"——?!"

However, the one swallowed by the wave of magic——was Takeru.

The 『Twilight』 magic power which hit the mirror directly assaulted his body.

"Ga-ha——!"

The slash lost its momentum after being repelled by the mirror and Takeru's body collapsed on the floor after being burned by azure-coloured flames. With a clunky metallic sound, Takeru rolled on the ground.

《"That's…my magic power…was repelled backwards…?"》

Lapis' voice full of consternation echoed in his head.

Takeru didn't let go of the sword, but he was unable to move until he catches a breath.

"Good grief, what a let down… I wondered what kind of property the famous 『Twilight』 is, but to think all it can do is absorb magic…"

Eliza rose up from the throne and moved up to where Takeru was.

And tramped over his head with her heel.

"…khh…"

"Just attacking by releasing previously absorbed magic… it's such a crude technique. You see, magic we are using is evolving just like scientific technology. Right now, just by using my 『Almighty』 property I'm able to reflect magic. It might not be as effective against an opponent who uses a complex operative procedure, but reflecting a wave of magic going in one direction is simple."

Eliza pressed her heel further, gouging out Takeru's cheek.

"I can praise you for the amount of magic power absorbed but… unfortunately, I'm not an ordinary witch. I'm an Ancient Wizard who survived more than a thousand years, the Chairman of West Side. There is no one who has the knowledge and amount of magic power generated close to mine… I'm almighty in every aspect that's why I'm called 『Almighty Witch』 you know?"

She raised her claws and licked them bewitchingly.

Neither Takeru nor Lapis have underestimated the enemy's ability. They challenged her with all they had.

However, they were undeniably lacking in their recognition. The enemy has survived the Vampire War and Witch Hunt War.

On top of being a vampire apostle, she had an overwhelming magical talent right from the beginning. Observation skill, analytical skill, operative procedure building talent, amount

of magic power. Any and all of it reached the level of genius.

“You have that much power…! Then why do you…!”

“To use the power for myself. Using it for justice? That kind of thing makes me sick.”

“Wrong…! It’s fine to use it for yourself! Just don’t involve the world for your own convenience!”

Noticing that Takeru gripped the sword, Eliza took out a spirit silver knife and stabbed it into his shoulder.

“Gh..aa.aAAaaAAAAA…!!”

《”——Aa….AAaa!”》

A tremendous pain struck Takeru and Lapis. It wasn’t pain of flesh, but pain of soul. They gasped in hard to describe pain when their very existence was hurt.

“Hmph, it seems quite effective but… you’re not an undead so it’s hard to kill your soul. But well, I’ll enjoy it for a bit.”

Then Eliza pierced Takeru’s body over and over again.

She avoided the vital points, tearing and scraping away his soul.

Unable to suppress his screams, Takeru’s yells resounded in the underground space.

After piercing him many times, Eliza got tired of it and threw away the spirit silver knife.

With a metallic sound, the knife slipped on the floor towards the entrance.

《“Ho…st…”》

Lapis feeble voice echoed in his head, but Takeru wasn’t even able to answer.

“It’s about time to finish this… it’s filthy blood, but I can’t hold it in for any longer… mm. I’ll make a special case out of you and have your blood for dinner.”

Eliza got down on her knees and moved her mouth with fangs bared to Takeru’s neck.

The tips of the fangs touched his skin. It seemed like she would suck out the blood out of him any moment but,

Next moment——Eliza heard a sound of something cutting through the air. It was too late to avoid, a sharp knife has pierced Eliza’s left arm. It was the spirit silver knife she has just thrown away.

“Guh——GHYAAAAAAAAAAAaAAaaaaaaaa!”

Spirit silver was a natural enemy for vampires. A simple silver would only cause them only a few burns, a spirit silver was capable of turning them into ashes in just a few moments.

Eliza’s left arm bulged out and collapsed like sand with a sparkle. The spirit silver knife lost its support and has dropped down with a high-pitched sound right in front of Takeru’s eyes.

Eliza herself was rolling around screaming.

The one who threw the spirit silver knife at her was… standing in the entrance to the large space, Kanaria.

“Kanaria…?”

Takeru summoned up his strength and raised his upper body.

Steam was raising from Kanaria’s body, and her entire body was swollen and bright red. She must have escaped from Eliza’s magical torture device and come here on her own.

She looked sorrowfully at Takeru.

“Take…ru……sor…ry……”

Reaching her limit, she fell forward. Hearing her apology Takeru made an anguished expression, and once again his pupils flashed with red.

“…Lapis, you can still go, right.”

《”…yes…no problem.”》

Although noise was running through her voice, he heard her clearly.

Takeru’s body was full of holes, but fortunately his consciousness was clear.

“What do you think we should do to defeat that woman?”

《”……currently, there is no way for us to win. In order to reuse the Grant of Twilight Twilight Enchantment two more minutes are required. Even if we brought it to close combat, with the currently remaining magic and host’s capability we should be able to withstand about five minutes.”》

When he heard Lapis analysis of the current situation, he saw screaming Eliza stand up with only one arm.

While staggering, Eliza covered her crack-covered face with the palm of her hand glaring at Takeru and Kanaria.

“I won’t forrrrrrgiiivvvveee youuuuu! I’ll make you disappear now! This is the first time I have been so insulted! I’ll erase you with all my strength…!”

As Eliza used her fangs to bit onto her own arm, an enormous magical circle appeared.

“《Elemental Breath Colourful Fog》”

The magic that was invoked along with the name, was literally a colourful fog. Different coloured magic particle grains appeared and filled a large amount of space with fog.

Takeru had a really bad feeling about it.

His hunch was right on spot. When he came in contact with the fog’s particles, he was being corroded by it at a fast pace.

“I already know that you can only absorb what your blade touches! That’s why I made it so you can’t touch it! It’s a magic that uses an operative procedure for each particle! Even if you absorb one, you can’t make all of the particles disappear! There’s nothing you can do!”

Raising a strained laughter Eliza danced round and round in the fog of particles.

Takeru could survive a bit longer if he doesn't breathe, but Kanaria was in danger.

Immediately after magic was invoked she started violently vomiting blood despite being unconscious.

The fog's effect was stronger than he imagined. At this rate, Kanaria's life was in danger.

《"Lapis, there should still be a way."》

Takeru moved the conversation to thoughts and asked Lapis.

《"…I don't recommend it. Host does not desire to fuse with me."》

《"Yeah, I think us being connected is good enough… but, it should be possible. To defeat her without fusing… right?"》

《"Really, you are a person who speaks about things with no basis. Please refrain from making theories based on your guts."》

《"I am aware of it."》

《"…theoretically it's possible. Although our fusion has been suspended, but the early stages of our fusion are already complete… if it's an incomplete God Hunting form it might work."》

《"So we can do it."》

《"Ten seconds. If it's any longer, once again our soul fusion, my erosion will resume. Before ten seconds pass please cancel it."》

《"How do I cancel it?"》

《"Just take your finger off the trigger."》

《"Ten seconds then. Enough."》

Takeru resolved himself and stood up.

Then like a knight he raised the sword in front of his chest and pulled the trigger.

Mighty logs I bid you now pile on high by the Rhine's shore

【" ——*Starke Scheite schichtet mir dort am Rande des Rheins zuhauf* .

Bright and fierce kindle a fire; let the noblest god's corse in its flames be consumed.

Hoch und hell lodre die Glut die den edlen Leib des hehrsten Gott verzehrt——"】

Along with the chant Takeru's body was clad in heat, a dreadful fear and relief has assaulted his soul.

Twilight-coloured magical circle appeared combining golden colour and the colour of the night. It released a shine inspiring dread in any living beings.

"A-after all this time…what's this…what is this…"

Eliza noticed Takeru's abnormal change, and with a spasming smile she stepped back.

In response to the magic Takeru's hair stood up, and he looked at Eliza with red eyes.

"This is what you wanted——the god-slaying power."

Immediately after, the armour on Takeru's body was brought to life, starting from neck to cheek, it continued to erode and cover his entire head.

And when a helmet covered entirety of his head, his inorganic pupils shone with amber colour.

《”——Grant of GodslayingRagnarök Enchant, activate.”》

The raised blade shone, and the moment magical circle broke it has started spreading flames.

Flames spread instantly and covered the entire space.

“Mn…? What’s happening…?”

Eliza’s teeth started chattering when she was enveloped by the distorted flames.

The moment Takeru swung down the sword he was raising up, an anomaly has occurred.

The 《Colourful FogElemental Breath》 that was drifting in the air disappeared noisily as if evaporating. Each of them were separate spells, but as soon as it touched the flame, it has disappeared in a blink of an eye.

On the other hand, Eliza felt discomfort in her own body. The cell freezing magic that was covering her face completely fell off. Her entire body turned ugly, and went back to the way it should originally be.

“AaaaAAAaAa, AAaAaaAAAAAAA! Why, what is this!”

She wailed and screamed.

God Hunting form… had top-end performance. Not limited to magic, it was devouring all magic in existence even if it was a godly grace. Magic, magic power, alchemy, Magical Heritages and gods themselves. Whether it was inside or outside of the body made no difference.

As long as one touches the flames in which this sword is clad, they will be feasted upon.

That is the power to destroy magic——Grant of GodslayingRagnarök Enchant.

Controlling the flames, Takeru moved closer to Eliza step by step.

《“Starting from now, for ten seconds you can’t use magic.”》

“…gh…hh…!!!”

《“Ten seconds. If you can hold out for ten seconds, you win.”》

Takeru raised his sword. Eliza looked around suspiciously, but when she realized her fate, she stretched out the sharp claws on her right hand.

“I… won’t——”

《“Eight seconds left… let’s go.”》

“——LOSE TO SUCH BUGSSSSSSSSS!”

With Eliza’s scream as a signal, the two clashed.

The claw and blade met, and a shockwave has caused a violent shock in the underground space.

《“Kusanagi Double-Edged style——Ghost Light Firefly!”》

Bloody Barrier

“Claw Arts——Bloody Dance”

An impact accompanied the barrage of their attacks.

Their blades moved at the same speed and were exchanged at the same power.

Grant of Godslaying

Eliza’s nail Magical Heritage’s performance was already lost, eaten by the Ragnarök Enchant.

However, this woman’s strength wasn’t only magic and Magical Heritage. No matter how distorted she was, her efforts and tremendous tenacity were like that of a dragon.

To acquire this much power, he had an idea just how much she had to suffer and grieve.

He thought she’s miserable. Despite having this much power and purity, he though that being this distorted is pitiful. If he hurries up and finishes her it will be her salvation.

But, *that wasn’t why*. There was a different reason for him to fight and to kill. Surely, for her own sake he would never kill her.

It was for his comrades sake, for his little sister sake, in order to protect everything. And above all, for his own sake.

He won’t compromise or make excuses. He will no longer make such claims. For his own sake, Takeru will——finish this woman.

“5, 4, 3…MY——WIIIIInnnnnnnnnnn!”

Riding on each other’s flow, they dodged their attacks matching their breathing.

However, the moment Eliza was confident of her victory, unexpectedly a blade pierced through her chest.

“——Aa…uu…?”

She looked at her own left breast.

In it, was struck a spirit silver knife held in Takeru’s left hand.

Before activating God Hunting form, he recovered the knife. He remembered the advice his master told him. Although it’s nice to ride with the flow, watch out for surprise attacks. That lesson, was used by Takeru in reverse.

While shifting a single attack from the tempo of continuous attacks. What decided it was a small knife.

“……”

When he pulled out the knife, Eliza staggered and leaned on Takeru’s body.

Takeru took off his finger from the trigger releasing God Hunting form and quietly squinted.

Starting from the chest Eliza’s body turned into ashes. And while rotting away, she placed her chin on Takeru’s shoulder and stroked his cheek once with her right hand.

On her face, she had a peaceful smile.

“What a shame…even if you…killed me…nothing will, change…West Side is…strong.”

“Even if that’s the case… I can’t let you live.”

“Whaat, for a mere human…you are unexpectedly fine man…that resolution…I like it.”

“……”

“For a reward…I will tell you…a single thing.”

Eliza’s face was crumbling away and collapsing.

“…all of the…misfortune is connected…by culprit…everything’s…origin…is…”

Her head collapsed, her cheeks disappeared, and just before her lips were blown away by the wind, Eliza spoke the name of that person.

“Oo…tori…Sou……getsu……hh.”

Ash flowed, and she disappeared with a glitter.

There was determination in Takeru’s narrowed pupils, then he quietly closed his eyes.

Feeling his body being swung up and down, Takeru woke up.

He was carried by someone on their back. Feeling its warmth, he raised his face.

“Hii…hii…hiii……!”

“…Ma-Mari?”

It was Mari. She did her best to carry Takeru by dragging her feet and proceeding forward little by little.

When she noticed that Takeru woke up, she just fell down on her knees and sat down on the floor.

“You woke upp, thank godd!”

“Sorry… I lost consciousness.”

“You have amazing muscles so you were super heavy~. Pat my head~.”

He smiled wryly and stroked the head of exhausted Mari. She went “ehehe~” and squinted comfortably.

Behind them, Takeru noticed on more person.

Kanaria stood behind the two with an awkward expression.

“……”

Mari probably treated her. There were only a few burns left.

With a light smile, he spoke to Kanaria.

“…are you okay?”

“……yup……um, Takeru…”

“Thanks for coming to save me.”

“…eh?”

“If not for you, I would have been killed at that rate.”

Takeru once again relayed “thank you” to Kanaria.

Kanaria cast down her gaze and shook her head.

“Kana is… a traitor…”

“You came to help me. That’s enough.”

“…but…”

“You aren’t a traitor. Also, I know that at that time, you were trying to stretch your hand out to me.”

Takeru said so, and pat Kanaria’s head as well. She sniffled loudly and wiped her tears with a sleeve.

“Kana…will not forgive Inquisition and Alchemist. I hate outside. Everyone there are Mama’s enemies… that won’t change.”

“……”

“But… she will go outside. There is someone, whom she has to meet.”

Seeing Kanaria’s determination, Takeru nodded strongly.

When the two of them were in their own world, Mari who was sitting a bit further away clicked her tongue and her mouth distorted.

“Patting bargain sale isn’t it… creepy.”

“…h-hey you…”

“Hmph. Rather than that, Takeru, an urgent report.”

When he was shocked by her displeased attitude, Mari swiftly stood up.

While brushing away dust from her butt, she pointed at Takeru with her index finger.

“——I found it, the miniaturized transfer device.”

She pushed up the edge of her hat with a finger and winked confidently.

Not far from the large underground space, there was a door.

Even though it was a door, there were no joints or doorknobs. Looking from the front it looked like a simple wall.

“Leave it to me.”

When Mari slid her hand along the wall as if stroking it, with a deep heavy sound it has fallen apart decomposing like a puzzle. In the back, there was a dim room.

“…we can go back with this. To where they are.”

Takeru was genuinely happy, his face relaxed and tears pooled in his eyes.

Certainly, Magic Academy was a nice place, but similarly to Mari, the place Takeru belonged was that platoon room. He wanted to meet his comrades as soon as possible. Also, he wanted to save Kiseki.

For the time being, Takeru set his foot inside of the room to check on the transfer device.

He intended for Mari and Kanaria transfer first. Since there was something Takeru still had to do, it was impossible for them to go together. Mari might say that she wants to stay together with him, but he'll send her even if he has to do it forcibly.

Takeru had to ask Mother and Orochi about how he can save Kiseki.

Since he might get rejected and restrained, he couldn't involve Mari in it.

However, his worries have suddenly come to an end.

When they entered the room and accustomed their eyes to the darkness——Mother and Orochi were already waiting for them.

"…yo, we thought you'd come."

Orochi spoke as if he already expected them. Although Mari was wary, Takeru stopped her with his hand. Mother was standing there in silence, her eyes closed. And Kanaria faced down.

The only ones allowed to speak in this place, were Takeru and Orochi.

"…Master."

"So you're going… even despite all of our persuasion, you really are an idiot aren't you."

"I'm sorry. But I… there's something I need to do over there.'

"I don't think outside is where you belong. You became a contractor of something as dangerous as Twilight-Type… you won't be welcomed anywhere else. You will be used, you will be used up and crushed that's all. Just like Mikoto was."

Hearing Orochi's heavy words, Takeru gripped his fist.

"…even so, over there is where I belong. Even a moment earlier I want to save Kiseki together with my comrades."

"……"

"It was Master who told me to protect everything I want to protect, I can't immerse myself in safety here. On the inner side of the world there are people like Master and Mother who hate war, witches and sorcerers who want to live in harmony."

"……"

"On the other hand, people outside don't know about the country of witches. If they learn about it, they will probably recognize it as a threat. Then, the war will be inevitable. Everything I want to protect will be lost. Every minute counts, I think."

"No way… you aren't trying to stop the war are you?"

Orochi spoke jokingly. Takeru fell silent and lowered his head, but raised it again soon enough.

"…I don't know if I'm able to that much. However, there are people outside who are trying to change the current state of Inquisition. I don't know how many… and the person on the top isn't all that trustworthy either."

With a wry smile, Takeru recalled the Student Council President's, Hoshijiro Nagare's careless expression.

"…I promised that person that I will answer whether will I cooperate with them or not. There's also something I borrowed and have to give back to that person. There's still many things I have to do."

Takeru opened his fist and stared at his palm.

"When I left Master for the first time I've said it right. 『Change the world』, that is."

"Haa, so that's still valid?"

"I think that to save everything, there's no other way than to do so. It's impossible for me alone, my own strength is quite poor… but right now, I have comrades who will fight by my side."

"……"

"The place I should fight my battles——is outside."

Orochi listened to it in silence. He didn't laugh, he didn't ridicule, nor was he amazed. He just listened to Takeru's pipe dream-like goal.

Takeru bit his lip and moved to the main issue.

"Um… I have declined your request, and I know that I'm being selfish here. But, no matter what, there's something… I need to learn from Master…"

"……hmph."

"P….please. My little sister's… Kiseki's——"

When Takeru spoke up to there, Orochi suddenly threw something to him.

Takeru caught the object in a hurry. It was a device that looked like a test tube. Inside of the liquid there was something like a foetus. And on the surface of the storage device, there was a piece paper tied to it with a rubber band.

"Take it. That's what are you looking for."

"…this is?"

As Takeru asked, Orochi folded his arms in front of his chest and replied.

"It's a tool for saving your little sister."

Takeru opened his eyes wide in surprise.

"The foetus inside of the tube is a homunculus. It was made with Kiseki's DNA I took when I was outside. Unlike a clone, homunculus has a brain but no soul dwells in it. Until you turn it into a Magical Heritage, the container won't take a single breath. Originally it was utilized for growing backup parts for transplants."

"…what do I do with it?"

"There's paper rolled around it right? It's an *Install magic* instant charm Mephisto was using. Use it on Kiseki."

As Takeru stood there stunned, Orochi continued.

“Homunculus is set to undergo a rapid growth the moment it contacts with outside air. If you use the charm on Kiseki, her soul will move from demon body into the homunculus. Like that, she won’t have to suffer because of that power any longer.”

“…rea…lly…?’

“However, this is the only charm that’s left. Failure is not allowed. After that homunculus will have to undergo maintenance regularly, even if it succeeds it will be difficult for her to live a normal life. As long as Inquisition is governing outside, they will never allow a homunculus to exist.”

“……nh.”

“In that sense, your determination to change the outside world wasn’t really off the mark.”

After saying that, Orochi loudly scratched his hair and sighed.

It was because he noticed the change in Takeru. He got a bit angry and clicked his tongue.

“It’s too early to cry you bird brain!”

“…y…yeshh…z-zorry…uUu…uu…!”

Without any shame Takeru continued to shed tears one after another. It was understandable. Finally… really, finally, he could see hope.

He always thought it’s just a pipe dream, having Kiseki spend her days laughing.

And that has suddenly entered his reach.

It was not a dream but reality.

It wasn’t only Takeru, Mari who know about his struggle also didn’t hide her tears.

Orochi snorted loudly and made a daunting pose in front of Takeru.

Never forgiving any spoiled actions, it was Orochi’s usual appearance.

“You little shit, next time I see you stop… I’ll cut your fucking head off so prepare yourself.”[4]

“…yess.”

“If you understand that, go already. We’ll deal with the aftermath here… geez, you really lack filial piety, or rather, respect for your master!”

“Yes, I’m sorry…!”

Takeru lowered his head with servility. Not only to Orochi, but he also bowed his head to Mother. When Mother watched the two’s exchange, she had a gentle smile on her face.

“I do not wish for you to go to battle… but your feelings for Mistilteinn have been conveyed properly. If you are as you are now, not exploited by that child, you’ll be able to use her correctly. It’s not something I should say from the position of someone stained in blood but… please, do your best. I expect much of your activities.”

As if sending off her own child, Mother joined her hands in front of her chest and prayed

for Takeru’s safety.

Takeru and Mari said their goodbyes to the two, and got onto the small transfer device.

Kanaria alone did not move from the entrance of the room where she faced down.

Her closed fist was trembling. She desperately tried to weave words with her lips, but regrets and fear prevented her from doing that.

Seeing Kanaria like that Orochi smiled bitterly and threw to her a sword with a belt he was carrying.

She raised her face and caught it.

“Take it… it’s your weapon.”

“…Orochi.”

“It was already once broken and lost its personality, but it acknowledges you as its master. It’s real hard to handle, but that’s perfect for you right.”

“Kana…Kana is…!”

“This is not the place you should be in, Kanaria. Go and see your other mother.”

Orochi bluntly brushed her off saying so.

Kanaria’s chest was also crushed by joy.

Fantasy Cult

It was the first time he called Kanaria’s name. Ever since Isuka left her in Valhalla, Kanaria was trained by Orochi for four years, and he was like a parent for her. He didn’t praise her carelessly and stood at the pinnacle of violence, but for her, he was still her reliable father.

Orochi brought Mother with him and passed by Kanaria’s side. When they were passing by, he stroked her head twice with his big hand.

Only three people remained in the room. Takeru placed a hand on Mari’s shoulder, and braced himself in the transfer device.

In order to conceive resolve for the future battles he was heading to.

“——Let’s go back, to the place we belong to.”

Carrying hope, they have returned.

Orochi and Mother left the room and walked down the hallway with the red carpet.

Walking in silence beside Orochi, Mother looked into his face.

“Are you really okay with that?”

To her question, Orochi responded with a smile.

“Whether its the inner world or outside world, for him it’s all the same. Be used by the Senate, or be used by Sougetsu. That’s why I let him choose… not to let go of Mistilteinn too, was the path he choose by himself.”

“But you were the one to induce him to do so.”

“For us as well it’s more convenient if he’s outside. He’ll be going around clawing around at Inquisition.”

“…you are a horrible person.”

“It might have been a blast, but we were able to properly prepare an escape route for him. He was also able to taste some safety. Still, I did intend to properly protect him you know? But, he isn’t a brat who needs my protection.”

As he said that, Orochi had a happy expression, but immediately after it stiffened turning firm.

It was a face of someone who was willing to make sacrifices, someone who would discard what he couldn’t save.

“One day we will meet again, I don’t know if as enemies or allies. But that’s fine. Just like they have things to do… we too, have things we need to do.”

“…yes. It’s just as you say, *Host.*”

Mother Goose erased her gentle expression, and spoke affirmatively to her master.

Orochi walked briskly facing forward. His appearance was no longer that of a teacher worrying about his bad disciple. It was as if——

“Let’s go——my *Gungnir*.”

——As if he was a vengeful demon from hell.

Epilogue

One week before Takeru and others escaped from Magic Academy.

The Pureblood Party's 『Kantō border line invasion』.

Fantasy Cult
The Valhalla. Pureblood Party's elite magic troops: 500 members. Ancient Wizards special forces, 50 members.

Knights Witch Hunters
The Inquisition. 『Spriggans』: 1000 members. 『Dullahan』: 50 members. Zero Unit's Dark Riot Police: 3 members.

The 35th Test Platoon: 3 members.

"Haa…haa…haa…!"

Saionji Usagi held an anti-material rifle of a similar length to her own body and dashed through a road full of debris.

She wasn't dressed in an uniform, she wore grey hooded camouflage clothes. On knees she wore a protector and in her backpack there was a large amount of ammunition.

This place, was the Grey City which was the closest place to Sanctuary, it has turned into a den of vagrants and criminals.

However, right now those people, ostracized by society were driven out.

The Grey City has already turned into a battlefield.

She hid herself, and after making sure she was safe Usagi started running again. By repeating that, Usagi arrived at the main street that was her destination. In the boulevard that would have been a down-town before Witch Hunt War, there was a battle between Knights Spriggans and Pureblood Party ongoing.

Usagi hid in the shadow of the building and dropped down on one knee.

"Ootori, I have arrived at the location… the building is in too bad a state, so I cannot climb up, but I can shoot from here."

《"So you weren't able to get up high… how about you Suginami?"》

A sound from the radio sounded in her ear.

《"Sentry bot is on the wait in the sky. I see everything."》

《"Connect directly with Saionji's goggles. She'll be able to grasp the enemy's positions."》

《"Roger that. But don't over-rely on it. It's a prototype, and since the bot's defensive capabilities are extremely low, it can be shot down any time."》

《"I have no intention of prolonging the battle for that long. If Dragoon forces arrive it will be easy to overwhelm them. However, there's a possibility of Magical Dragoons or Ancient Wizards appearing so we can't act relieved."》

While listening to the conversation between Ikaruga and Ouka, Usagi placed her barrel on top of debris and peeked through the scope.

“Preparations complete. Ootori, I can’t tell your position because of camouflage magic. Please report.”

While calmly watching the battlefield’s scenery reflected in the scope, she looked for Ouka’s figure.

《”——Abandoned building north-northwest of you, rooftop.”》

As she was told to, Usagi turned her barrel in north-northwest direction. On top of the building there was something which looked like a distorted space.

The distortion turned to its original state momentarily and the person standing there could be seen clearly.

Dressed in crimson mantle and armour, it was Ootori Ouka’s appearance——.

“……”

With her eyes narrowed, Ouka overlooked the battlefield.

…it’s been a week already since we were thrown into the battlefield.

With two enormous handguns 『Vlad』 in her hands, Ouka spat out a deep sigh.

Three weeks have elapsed since Pureblood Party has taken total control of the Grey City.

After Takeru disappeared, large forces of The Pureblood Party appeared through transfer magic and spread throughout the Grey City and conquered a part of the border. Inquisition was surprised and built up a line of defence in a hurry. And until this moment, they continued to suppress enemy forces.

These kinds of large-scale battles haven’t happened ever since the time of the Witch Hunt War.

Because there was no official announcement as to where the enemy forces appeared from, the general public’s anxiety was on the rise and the locals have already begun evacuating.

Although the battlefield was limited to Grey City, Ouka had already resolved herself.

The war, has already started.

“We will suppress the enemies right now——with my attack as a signal, Saionji will aim at the armour-wearing magical knights and the enemies stretching out protective barriers.”

《“Roger that.”》

“Suginami, continue reconnaissance with your sentry bot. If as much as a shadow of new enemy appears, report immediately.”

《“Yes yes, rog~er. “》

The 35th platoon was on the battlefield’s frontline.

For a student’s test platoon to enter battlefield was inconceivable.

However, Inquisition’s Chairman Ootori Sougetsu had them take responsibility for

Kusanagi Kiseki’s escort convoy operation’s failure and ordered them to enter the battlefield.

No matter how much they tried to excuse themselves by saying that if not for them, Kiseki would have been taken away by Valhalla, but since Takeru and Ouka have escaped from prison they couldn’t overturn the decision.

Fantasy Cult

The 35th platoon definitely did not wish to be on this battlefield.

“…you guys, we’re going to survive no matter what. Until Kusanagi comes back!”

As a provisional captain, Ouka was leading the 35th platoon to battle.

Kusanagi… where are you right now…

Worrying about Takeru’s safety, she plunged into the futile battle.

Afterword

Haunted is staring in my direction, looking like one of my comrades.

——Do you want… to be comrades…?

And like that, it's the sixth volume. I hope you enjoyed it.

Long time no see. It's Yanagimi Touki.

The first time I made it to sixth volume… it's something very meaningful to me. I was able to come this far thanks to all of you. Really, thank you very much.

Now then, the sixth volume continued from the previous volume, but let's talk about the Magic Academy's existence that was hidden up until now. The forces of witch's side are far greater than Takeru and the others have imagined, and yet they have complicated circumstances. They are suffering from chaos and affairs in their own world.

This time I focused on expanding the bond with Lapis.

I thought of revealing the truth that was shrouded in mystery up until now little by little.

There still are some mysteries about Lapis left, but I think I will gradually reveal them.

This time's enemy was a vampire who has overcome its mortal enemy, the sunlight with heavy make-up.

Although she has continously spread an odor of a small fry, personally, I had fun writing her.

Aren't people who do their best to make themselves look younger cute?

Despite being a villain she was a worldly person, doesn't that make you want to support her effort in becoming stronger?

That's what I thought but, not really. She's a villain after all.

Since the magic side's darkness isn't limited to her, in the future various people will pop up… probably.

It's about time I'm out of things to write about.

Let' see… then.

——Welcome to the small breast paradise.

This time's Mari has small breasts and Lapis is flat, the sub-character Inia has no boobs too. Kanaria isn't all that big yet either.

This time, let's talk about flat chests.

Great person once said: Big boobs are just a mass of fat. Let alone a symbol of status, it's a drawback. Just like the flabby flabby stomachs and double chins, the large breasts are just fat.

It’s truly like that. It’s meat.

Troubled that all nutrition goes to your breasts?

Please allow those gentlemen who love small and flat chests to speak too.

That, is it any different from fat? Is what they say.

Waste-less is modest am I right? They say.

They are worth touching because they are modest!

Rather than Mount Everest or Mount Fuji I love the great plains of savannah that spreads all the way to horizon!

——And so!

……

I’m not really trying to fill the afterword… really, I’m not.

Now then, acknowledgements.

S-sama who is in charge of me and always accurately points things out. This time, the one whom I requested of to make lots of character designs, Kippu-sama who has drawn wonderful illustrations. Hanao Sutarou-sensei who always draws cool action scenes in the comic. Everyone in the Fujimi Shoubou who turned my work into a book.

And to everyone who has read the sixth volume.

As well as everyone who read the afterword of the boob freak.

You have my heartfelt thanks.

Now then, let us meet in the seventh volume. Scheduled to come up next is the story of the Small Fry Platoon that was left behind outside. Although, I don’t know if it will come out as it’s planned to.

It’s still continuing. Look forward to it!

Yanagimi Touki

Translator’s Notes and References

1. ↑ Avec, couple or lovers in French, I think?
2. ↑ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ushi-oni
3. ↑ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanabata
4. ↑ I’m guessing he refers to training, considering Takeru stopped training for a long time since he lost to Ouka, until the start of volume 3.